



A Bridge to the Schism.

Edinoverie, Russian Orthodoxy, and the Ritual
Formation of Confessions, 1800-1918.

James Matthew White

Thesis submitted for assessment with a view to
obtaining the degree of Doctor of History and Civilization
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A Bridge to the Schism: *Edinoverie*, Russian Orthodoxy and the Ritual Formation of Confessions, 1800-1918

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Abstract

Between 1800 and 1918, the Russian Orthodox Church attempted to re-unite the Old Believer schism with Russian Orthodoxy by means of *Edinoverie*. This was a uniate movement that would allow schismatic converts to retain their old rituals whilst being subordinated to the authority of the Church hierarchy. From the very moment of its foundation, *Edinoverie* was subject to high levels of suspicion from most members of the Church. The rules of Metropolitan Platon, the settlement that created *Edinoverie* in 1800, embodied this distrust: the provisions sought to keep the converts at the boundaries of the Orthodox confession so as to prevent them from tempting Orthodox parishioners towards the schism.

Over the next 118 years, *edinovertsy*, churchmen and government authorities struggled with the legacy of Platon's rules as they tried to define *Edinoverie*'s place between Orthodoxy and Old Belief. In doing so, they devised new ways about thinking of the Orthodox confession. However, the Church enacted reform of *Edinoverie* reluctantly. It was permanently held back by fear of apostasy. Pressure for change always came from without, primarily from the side of the state. The shifts in its policies towards Old Belief ultimately forced the Holy Synod to renovate *Edinoverie* so as to maintain its missionary appeal.

By 1918, *Edinoverie* had not come any closer to bringing the Old Believers back into the Church. Its attractiveness was undermined by earlier state coercion, by the hostility of many churchmen and by the contradictions inherent within its foundation. *Edinoverie* also represented a fundamental misunderstanding on the side of the Church as to why the schism had begun in the first place.

To Doris May Marsh (1929-2014)
In Loving Memory

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Introduction

On 12 January 2013, a peculiar liturgy was held in the Orthodox Uspenskii cathedral that nestles in the heart of the Moscow Kremlin. The 500 worshippers who attended to have Metropolitan Iuvenalii administer the sacraments crossed themselves with two fingers rather than the customary three. The hallelujahs were sung twice rather than thrice. Monophonic chants were performed rather than the usual polyphonic singing with its distinctive baroque elements. This was a liturgy performed in the ancient style of the Russian Orthodox Church and it was the first time that such a divine service had been seen in the Uspenskii cathedral for over 350 years. In the mid seventeenth century, the old rituals had been expelled from the churches of Russian Orthodoxy, along with their adherents, the Old Believers. It took until the twentieth century for the Church to go back on its liturgical prohibition, after much blood was split and pain caused in its enforcement. The long road that the old rites have taken back to acceptability has its beginning in *Edinoverie*.

Aims and Goals

What is *Edinoverie*? This is the question that most people will have upon picking up this thesis. It is also the question that lies at the heart of the investigation. There is no easy answer. Given how alien the term is, I offer a provisional definition that can guide the reader throughout the following discussion. *Edinoverie* translates approximately as the united faith or unity in faith. It describes a settlement formulated in 1800 whereby Russian ‘schismatics’ would be allowed to keep their distinctive rituals and forms of parish management in unity with Russian Orthodoxy so long as they conceded the Church’s legitimacy and authority. The settlement was defined by sixteen conditions, or rules, formulated principally by Metropolitan Platon (Levshin) of Moscow. By the end of imperial era in 1917, those who converted on the basis of those rules probably numbered no more than 350,000 and were scattered in 300 to 400 parishes across the Empire.¹ Those living according to the rules of Platon were called *edinovertsy*. The schismatics joining on the basis of the settlement were the Old Believers, a diverse and diffuse group who had rejected liturgical reforms in the mid seventeenth centuries and thus had left the flock of the Russian Orthodox Church.

¹ These are estimates: I discuss how I arrived at them in Chapter II.

This rough sketch belies the fact that even defining *Edinoverie* has proven controversial. Bishop Apollos (Beliaev) of Viatka described it in 1867 as ‘a step to Orthodoxy’;² Professor Nikolai Ivanovskii in 1878 as the ‘conditional unity of the Old Believers with the Orthodox Church’;³ the *Edinoverie* priest Simeon Shleev in the same year as ‘Old Belief reconciled with the ecumenical Russian Church’;⁴ the priestless Old Believer Lev Pichugin in 1909 as ‘not the true old Church but a copy of the Latin Uniate one’;⁵ Metropolitan (now Patriarch) Kirill (Gundiaev) in 2004 as a ‘a real and active bridge between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Old Believer concords’;⁶ and the modern historians R. V. Kaurkin and O. A. Pavlova in 2011 as an ‘inalienable part of the Russian Orthodox Church which is based on unity of Old Believers via means of accepting the priesthood from it with the right to observe the church rituals and sacraments from the time of the first five [Russian] patriarchs [i.e. 1589-1652].’⁷

The problem of defining *Edinoverie* was that it was partly Old Believer and partly Russian Orthodox, partly of the schism and partly of the Church. Defining the term necessarily means defining the relationship of the phenomenon, and the people in it, to both the Russian Orthodox Church and Old Belief. This leads me to the second aim of the thesis. I seek to understand how *Edinoverie*’s relationship with the Orthodox Church changed between 1800 and 1918. If an observer were to look at the relationship between the Church and the converts at these dates, they would note two strongly divergent situations. In 1800, the Moscow Old Believers who turned to Metropolitan Platon with a request for unity in faith stipulated a comprehensive degree of intercommunion, suggesting that the Orthodox should be allowed to turn to *Edinoverie* priests for the sacraments and should be permitted to join *Edinoverie* if they so pleased. Platon rejected these proposals, instead instituting strict controls that would divide the two flocks of the Church. In 1918, the Orthodox Church asserted complete unity with the *edinovertsy*. However, a vocal group of *Edinoverie* reformers argued for a series of changes that

² I. A., “Obozrenie Viatskoi eparkhii,” *Viatskie eparkhial'nye vedomosti*, no. 18 (1867): 549.

³ N. I. Ivanovskii, *Otzyv ekstraordinarnogo professora Kazanskoi dukhovnoi akademii Ivanovskogo, po povodu proshenii edinoveritsev sviateishemu sinodu o nuzhdakh edinoveriia*, [1878], 5.

⁴ S. Shleev, ed., *Edinoverie i ego stoletnee organizovannoe sushchestvovanie v Russkoi tserkvi* (St. Petersburg, 1901), 17.

⁵ L. F. Pichugin, *O edinoverii v Russkoi tserkvi (uniia edinoveriia). Polemicheskii ocherk*. (Moscow, 2009), 73.

⁶ Kirill (Gundiaev), “Dokload mitropolita Smolenskogo i Kaliningradskogo Kirilla, predsedatelia otdela vneshnikh tserkovnykh sviazei Moskovskogo patriarkhata po voprosam vsaimootnoshenii s Russkoi zarubezhnoi tserkov'iu i staroobraidchestvom,” *Mospat.ru*, <https://mospat.ru/archive/7769.html> (accessed 29 January 2014).

⁷ R. V. Kaurkin and O. A. Pavlova, *Edinoverie v Rossii: ot zarozhdeniia idei do nachala XX veka* (St. Petersburg, 2011), 6.

would serve to isolate *Edinoverie* from the administrative structures and personnel of the Church. In other words, both parties took stances opposite to those of a century before. How did such a considerable change occur? I shall argue that it was mostly due to a structural dialectic between two forces, confessionalisation on the one hand and ritual re-evaluation on the other (I define these terms below).

Finally, this research seeks to evaluate *Edinoverie* and its success. When it was begun in 1800, it had the grand aim of bringing the schism to an end. By 1918, it was clear this had failed. Old Belief was as strong as it had ever been whilst *Edinoverie* was numerically insignificant, riven with internal division and regarded with either disinterest or distrust by much of the Church and the schismatics. I will raise two arguments to explain this trajectory of development. Firstly the Platonic settlement of 1800 was fundamentally unsuited to creating a sense of unity between the converts and Orthodox parishioners. The Church was never able to resolve the contradictions contained within the settlement. Some of these were irresolvable. Equally the Synod proved loath to act on those that did have a solution. Policy towards *Edinoverie* was always enacted reluctantly and in response to outside pressure. The missionary appeal of *Edinoverie* to the Old Believers was partially limited by legitimate doubts regarding its status and the Church consistently failed to assuage those anxieties. Secondly, there was a fundamental misunderstanding about Old Belief's objection to the Orthodox Church. Rejection of the new ritual was the foundation of a wider belief that the Church had fallen into heresy. Consequently giving them priests who would perform the old rite under the authority of the Church was mostly futile. At best, it provided a gateway for those schismatics who doubted the rectitude of their own position. The rest of Old Belief would be unconvinced by the offer because it did nothing to dissuade them of Russian Orthodoxy's illegitimacy.

To summarise this thesis hopes to furnish answers to three questions: 1) what was *Edinoverie*; 2) what was its relationship to the Orthodox Church; and 3) why did it fail to bring the schism to an end.

Scope

To answer these three questions, I will use a *longue durée* perspective that, at its broadest, stretches from 1551 to 2014. However, the focus is very much on the 118 years between Platon's rules of 1800 and the Russian Church Council of 1918. Breadth is required in order to fully examine the interplay between confessionalisation and ritual re-evaluation, the two structural processes that shaped *Edinoverie*'s relationship to the Church.

I have imposed one key thematic limitation. For the major part of this thesis, I do not examine the connection between *Edinoverie* and Old Belief. I do not deny that this relationship is extremely important, perhaps even fundamental, to understanding *Edinoverie*. I must plead the constraints of time and space as the reasons for this neglect. Understanding Old Believer views on *Edinoverie* would require a wholly different source base to the one I have used here as well as a completely different set of conceptual tools. It would form a story too expansive to fit within the confines of this thesis. It is also a valid analytical choice. The histories of *Edinoverie*'s relationships with the Church and the schism are sufficiently different in character and scope to warrant separation. Therefore this relationship remains in the background, occasionally moving to the front of the stage to illustrate various points but then fading away again into the scenery.

Historiography

In terms of the English language literature on *Edinoverie*, my review must be brief. There is almost none. The longest treatments are those by G. L. Bruess, who dedicates half a chapter in his book to archbishop Nikephoros (Theotokis') creation of a *Edinoverie* community in 1782, Irina Paert in her study on Old Believer marriage, and S. Beliajeff, who considers the Moscow *edinovertsy* in the mid nineteenth century. Simon Dixon and Elise Wirtschafter have also furnished brief descriptions.⁸ Consequently *Edinoverie* remains almost as understudied as in 1887 when the American diplomat A. F. Heard provided an account of those 'Old Believers, less imbued with prejudice, or more tolerant in matters of conscience' who 'yielded to the earnest appeals and exhortations of the clergy' and joined *Edinoverie*.⁹

In terms of other European languages, the situation is only slightly improved. Pia Pera has written an article in Italian on the foundation of *Edinoverie* in the late eighteenth century and Eugeniusz Iwaniec has provided a biography of the *Edinoverie* printer Konstantin Golubov in Polish.¹⁰ Pera's contribution is by far the most ambitious, using

⁸ G. L. Bruess, *Religion, Identity and Empire: A Greek Archbishop in the Russia of Catherine the Great* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 135–196; I. Paert, "Regulating Old Believer Marriages: Ritual, Legality, and Conversion in Nicholas I's Russia," *Slavic Review* 63, no. 3 (2004): 555–76; A. S. Beliajeff, "The Rise of the Old Orthodox Merchants of Moscow 1771–1894" (Ph.D. dissertation, Syracuse University, 1975), 152–177; E. K. Wirtschafter, *Religion and Enlightenment in Catherinian Russia. The Teachings of Metropolitan Platon* (DeKalb: Niu Press, 2013), 106; S. Dixon, "Archimandrite Mikhail (Semenov) and Russian Christian Socialism," *Historical Journal* 51, no. 3 (2008): 694–695.

⁹ A. F. Heard, *The Russian Church and Russian Dissent, Comprising Orthodoxy, Dissent, and Erratic Sects* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), 231–233.

¹⁰ P. Pera, "Edinoverie. Storia di un tentativo di integrazione dei vecchi credenti all'interno dell'ortodossia," *Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa* 20, no. 2 (1984): 290–351 and E. Iwaniec,

Edinoverie as a lens to examine the attitudes of the Russian state and Orthodox Church to toleration and its limits. Her work mirrors the analysis in Chapter I but she only briefly pursues *Edinoverie* beyond 1800.

Russian Orthodoxy has been rather more studied in English. Prior to the late 1970s, the Church was either ignored or held to be little more than a stagnant bastion of tsarist ideology, unmoved by the suffering of its flock and unchanging in the face of modernity.¹¹ Early studies by J. S. Curtiss and Nicolas Zernov suggested that this was not the case but it was Gregory Freeze who was the first to comprehensively challenge this picture with exhaustive archival research.¹² Whilst acknowledging that the Church's relationship with the state was a close one and that it suffered from insurmountable internal problems, he argued that it did not prevent the Church from possessing some autonomy and that infringement of this autonomy produced resistance and dissent. Equally, he demonstrated that the modernisation of the state and the Church went hand in hand and that the latter was always concerned about how best to reach out to Orthodox believers.¹³

The trickle initiated by Freeze became a flood with the opening of the archives in 1991. Thanks to studies by Simon Dixon, Christine Worobec, Laura Engelstein, Chris Chulos, Vera Shevzov, Irina Paert, Scott Kenworthy and others in the last two decades, it is now impossible for anyone to seriously maintain the argument that Russian Orthodoxy was just 'a handmaiden' of the autocracy or that it failed to develop responses to modern conditions.¹⁴ They have demonstrated that the Church in late imperial Russia was a vital

Droga Konstancya Golubowa od Starowierstwa do Prawosławia: Karty z Dziejów Duchowości Rosyjskiej w Drugiej Połowie XIX wieku (Białystok, 2001).

¹¹ As an example, see R. Pipes, *Russia Under the Old Regime* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1974), 245.

¹² J. S. Curtiss, *Church and State in Russia: The Last Years of the Empire, 1900 -1917*, 2nd ed. (New York: Octagon Books, 1965); N. Zernov, *The Russian Religious Renaissance of the Twentieth Century* (London Darlington: Longman and Todd, 1963).

¹³ G. L. Freeze, *The Russian Levites: Parish Clergy in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1977); G. L. Freeze, *Parish Clergy in 19th Century Russia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983); G. L. Freeze, "Handmaiden of the State? The Orthodox Church in Imperial Russia Reconsidered," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 46 (1985): 82–102.

¹⁴ S. Dixon, "Church, State and Society in Late Imperial Russia: The Diocese of St. Petersburg" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of London, 1993); C. D. Worobec, *Possessed: Women, Witches, and Demons in Imperial Russia* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2001); L. Engelstein, "Holy Russia in Modern Times: An Essay on Orthodoxy and Cultural Change," *Past and Present* 173 (2001): 129–56; C. J. Chulos, *Converging Worlds: Religion and Community in Peasant Russia, 1861-1914* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2003); V. Shevzov, *Russian Orthodoxy on the Eve of Revolution* (Oxford: New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); I. Paert, *Spiritual Elders: Charisma and Tradition in Russian Orthodoxy* (Northern Illinois University Press, 2010); S. Kenworthy, *The Heart of Russia: Trinity-Sergius, Monasticism, and Society after 1825* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011);

and socially significant institution that at the same time had to deal with a number of overwhelming structural deficits imposed through its relationship with the state. Simultaneously, these scholars have peered into the lives of believers and shown how individuals and groups lived their religion, maintaining a balance between the dictates of official Church policy and their own material and spiritual needs.¹⁵

The latter insight has emerged from a recent conceptual shift. The relationship between churches and believers was seen as a dichotomy between official and popular religion until the late 1970s. This paradigm came into question as historians became more interested in studying the interactions between the two categories rather than polarised opposition. In doing so, they raised doubts about the viability of the concepts of ‘popular’ and ‘official’ religion.¹⁶ Historians of Orthodoxy, and Russian religions in general, inherited this conceptual problem and so some studies still demonstrate a reliance on these concepts.¹⁷

Recently, academics (particularly Chulos, Shevzov and Worobec) have rejected the categories because they hold the dichotomy to be false. They instead propose that we examine the problem through the concepts of ‘ascribed’ and ‘lived’ religion.¹⁸ This framework is held to maximise our ability to see the mutual interaction between Church theology and the requirements of believers. The two shaped each other in intriguing ways that have traditionally escaped the purview of scholars. This new conceptual framework does not ignore conflict and tension between the Church and its believers. Rather, it allows us to emphasise that such conflicts were sites of negotiation and compromise

For invaluable essay collections, see R. L. Nichols and T. C. Stavrou, eds., *Russian Orthodoxy under the Old Regime* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1978); G. Hosking, ed., *Church, Nation and State in Russia and Ukraine* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991); S. K. Batalden, ed., *Seeking God: The Recovery of Religious Identity in Orthodox Russia, Ukraine and Georgia* (IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1993); V. A. Kivelson and R. H. Greene, eds., *Orthodox Russia: Belief and Practice Under the Tsars* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003); M. D. Steinberg and H. J. Coleman, eds., *Sacred Stories: Religion and Spirituality in Modern Russia* (Indiana, 2007).

¹⁵ Other notable works in this new historiography include N. Kizenko, *A Prodigal Saint: Father John of Kronstadt and the Russian People* (Pennsylvania, 2000); L. Manchester, *Holy Fathers, Secular Sons: Clergy, Intelligentsia, and the Modern Self in Revolutionary Russia* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2008); R. H. Greene, *Bodies Like Bright Stars: Saints and Relics in Orthodox Russia* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2010).

¹⁶ The studies produced in this vein of thought are too numerous to mention individually. For an adept review of the major works and the conceptual shift in general, see C. Ford, “Religion and Popular Culture in Modern Europe,” *The Journal of Modern History* 65, no. 1 (1993): 152–75.

¹⁷ For an example of an uncritical approach to the concept of popular religion, see L. Heretz, *Russia on the Eve of Modernity. Popular Religion and Traditional Culture under the Last Tsars* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

¹⁸ C. D. Worobec, “Lived Orthodoxy in Imperial Russia,” *Kritika* 7, no. 2 (2006); Shevzov, *Russian Orthodoxy*; P. Werth, “Lived Orthodoxy and Confessional Diversity. The Last Decade on Religion in Modern Russia,” *Kritika* 12, no. 4 (2011): 849–65.

where common ground and leeway existed. They were not necessarily irresolvable clashes between irreconcilable conceptions of religion.

My study of *Edinoverie* is a product of this historiographical evolution. However, I must also note that most of this thesis is dedicated to looking at ‘ascribed confessional identities.’ These were proclamations by the Synod, bishops, theologians and educated *Edinoverie* leaders as to what *Edinoverie* and Orthodoxy *should* mean, what practices and beliefs *should* define them. My conclusions about ‘lived confessional identities,’ and the impact of official declarations upon them, are much more tentative and limited. Given that most are largely unfamiliar with the story of *Edinoverie*, I believe that a focus on policy formation towards it is justified. If *Edinoverie* is to be studied in the future, particularly at the ground level, the opinions of the central level of Church administration must be understood in some detail, especially since many of the issues were theologically complex.

Edinoverie was a part of Old Belief as much as it was a part of Orthodoxy and therefore some consideration of the literature surrounding the schism is required. While the field is currently less mature than the study of Russian Orthodoxy, there has been some considerable movement in recent years. Robert Crummey, Roy Robson, Georg Michels, Irina Paert, Douglas Rogers, Thomas Marsden and Eva Maeder have approached the question from a variety of directions and with copious use of archival material.¹⁹ In terms of conceptual tools, a general consensus has yet to emerge. Crummey has proposed the notion of ‘textual communities,’ Robson ‘a subculture,’ and Rogers ‘an ethical repertoire,’ all of which are geared to understanding the internal dynamics of Old Believer communities and their interaction with the state and the rest of Russian society. Although all of these ideas have contributed to the present study, it is with Robson that I have the closest affinity, given his assertion that ‘Old Belief was an ongoing relationship between the symbols of pre-Nikonian Orthodoxy and the lives of the old ritualist

¹⁹ R. O. Crummey, *Old Believers and the World of Antichrist: Vyg Community and the Russian State, 1694-1855* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1970); R. O. Crummey, “Old Belief as Popular Religion: New Approaches,” *Slavic Review* 52, no. 4 (1993); R. Robson, *Old Believers in Modern Russia* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1995); G. B. Michels, *At War with the Church: Religious Dissent in Seventeenth-Century Russia* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000); Paert, *Old Believers*; D. Rogers, *The Old Faith and the Russian Land. A Historical Ethnography of Ethics in the Urals*. (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2009); T. Marsden, “The Crisis of Religious Toleration in Mid Nineteenth-Century Imperial Russia: The State and the Old Believers, 1842-55” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oxford, 2011); E. Maeder, *Altgläubige zwischen Aufbruch und Apokalypse. Religion, Verwaltung und Wirtschaft in einem Ostsibirischen Dorf (1900-1930er Jahre)* (Zurich: Chronos, 2008). See also the excellent essay collection, G. B. Michels and R. L. Nichols, eds., *Russia’s Dissident Old Believers 1650-1950* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009).

faithful.”²⁰ The question of rites and what they symbolised is key to the question of *Edinoverie* and how *edinovertsy* lived.

One rapidly growing historiography is the study of religious minorities and their interaction with the Russian Church and state. Paul Werth’s study on missionary activities on the Kama River is the most well known example, although I should also mention Heather Coleman’s work on the Russian Baptists, Robert Crews’ examination of Russia’s Muslims and Nicholas Breyfogle’s analysis of sectarians in the Caucasus.²¹ This body of work has increasingly thrown light on the nature of religious toleration in Russia, a subject this thesis is also occupied with. *Edinoverie*, whilst putatively a part of the Orthodox Church, faced many of the same problems as other religious minorities in its relationship with Church and state and so it informs our conclusions. However, this literature sometimes has the tendency to marginalise the opinion of the Church and thus fails to consider its opinion seriously. Equally, such works sometimes render the Church as monolithic and do not take into account the multiplicity of views within the institution. By studying *Edinoverie*, we see a direct interaction of the Church with the question of religious heterodoxy in the Russian Empire. Therefore it is absolutely necessary to consider the institutional and theological rationale behind the actions of Orthodox churchmen at all levels of its administration.

The historiographical situation in Russian is different. Firstly, a huge amount of literature on *Edinoverie* was produced between the 1860s and 1918. Some of the books and articles written were highly sophisticated and many printed vast swathes of unpublished material, particularly in relation to the period between 1761 and 1800. The most comprehensive of these works is undoubtedly Simeon Shleev’s 1910 history *Edinoverie in its Internal Development* and it remains the standard account.²² I should also mention an anonymous history from 1867 that offers invaluable data on the development of *Edinoverie* in all the provinces of the Russian Empire during the first half of the nineteenth century.²³ The author’s focus on the local dimensions of *Edinoverie* offers a good counterbalance to

²⁰ Robson, *Old Believers*, 9.

²¹ P. Werth, *At the Margins of Orthodoxy: Mission, Governance, and Confessional Politics in Russia’s Volga-Kama Region, 1827-1905* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002); H. J. Coleman, *Russian Baptists and Spiritual Revolution, 1905-1929* (Bloomington, 2005); R. D. Crews, “Empire and the Confessional State: Islam and Religious Politics in Nineteenth-Century Russia,” *American Historical Review* 108, no. 1 (2003): 50–83; N. Breyfogle, *Heretics and Colonizers: Forging Russia’s Empire in the South Caucasus* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005).

²² S. Shleev, *Edinoverie v svoem vnutrennem razvitii. (V raz’iasnenie ego malorasprostranennosti sredi staroobriadtsev)*. (St. Petersburg, 1910).

²³ M. S., *Istoricheskii ocherk edinoveriia* (St Petersburg, 1867).

Shleev's tendency to stick to developments in Petersburg and Moscow. Nikolai Lysogorskii's massive and incredibly detailed works on Metropolitan Platon's relation to the schismatics and *Edinoverie*'s growth in the Don region are profoundly useful, especially since he used enormous appendices to publish a wealth of documents dredged up from the archives.²⁴ In terms of journals, Nikolai Subbotin's *Bratskoe slovo* and Shleev's *Pravda pravoslaviia* promulgated numerous articles and sources that have enduring value for the study of *Edinoverie* in imperial Russia. The diocesan gazettes and national Church newspapers are also replete with information.

Nevertheless, the modern historian must approach these works with caution. All of the authors (particularly Shleev and Subbotin) played a role in the controversies that occurred as the relationship between Orthodoxy and *Edinoverie* shifted. Many of their works exist explicitly as polemics, while others clearly serve to provide historical legitimacy to particular reform projects, grounding them in the past through narratives that emphasise certain events whilst excluding others. These biases are precisely what I intend to study and therefore I must try to avoid internalising and replicating them.

The Soviet era understandably hampered both the study of Russian Orthodoxy and *Edinoverie*. Between 1924 and 1991, only a single article was published on *Edinoverie* and historians interested in the Church had to frame their research within the regime's ruling Marxist-Leninist ideology.²⁵ Thus we find works with titles emphasising the role of the Church as an agent of counter-revolution and reaction. One should not ignore the contribution of such works in terms of their research but the need to assert a blatantly ideological interpretation damages the value of their conclusions.²⁶ The case for Old Belief differed. A tradition dating back to the nineteenth century saw the Old Believers as a potential source of radicalism and popular values. Soviet historians continued the trend, celebrating the schismatics as rebels against the autocracy whilst also castigating them for their obscurantist religious beliefs.²⁷ As Rogers has pointed out, the idea of Old Belief as a repository of uncorrupted Russianness motivated a large number of archaeographers to flock into the provinces in search of rare manuscripts.²⁸ Their tireless efforts are the basis of all modern studies of Old Belief and so their invaluable contribution must be

²⁴ N. V. Lysogorskii, *Moskovskii mitropolit Platon Levshin kak protivoraskol'nic'ii deiatel'* (Rostov' on Don, 1905) and *Edinoverie na Donu v XVIII i XIX v. (po 1883 g.)* (Sergiev Posad, 1915).

²⁵ E. Shleev, "O edinoverii," *Zhurnal Moskovskoi patriarkhii*, no. 6 (1950): 34–43.

²⁶ This best example is P. N. Zyrianov, *Pravoslavnaia tserkov' v bor'be s revoliutsiei 1905-1917 gg.* (Moscow, 1984).

²⁷ Take for instance A. E. Katunskii, *Starobriadchestvo* (Moscow, 1972).

²⁸ Rogers, *The Old Faith*, 165–173.

recognised. We should also mention the influential two-volume study of S. A. Zen'kovskii, published in exile in 1970. This is a comprehensive study but done largely without access to archival material.²⁹

The situation for the study of the Orthodox Church has changed drastically since 1991. Russian historians have published voluminously on a great many aspects of the Church and popular piety. Sergei Firsov, Mikhail Babkin and S. V. Rimskii in particular have made great strides in writing analytically complex histories of the Synodal era.³⁰ Aleksandr Kravetskii's study on the Church mission and A. S. Lavrov's study of sorcery are also particularly valuable.³¹ In terms of Old Belief, I would be remiss if I failed to mention O. P. Ershova's work on Old Belief, especially in her pioneering 1999 study on the relationship between the schismatics and the state in the nineteenth century.³² Numerous journals dedicated to studying Old Belief have capitalised on the industry of the Soviet archaeographers to furnish interesting conclusions, especially in terms of regional history.

Nevertheless, much of the modern work suffers from historiographical over-reaction. Used to hearing the Church vilified in the Soviet era, some historians have, perhaps understandably, gone in completely the opposite direction and have presented the Church as an uncomplicatedly heroic force that was cruelly martyred by the unabashed atheistic evil of the Bolsheviks. This narrative owes no small debt to the revived power and prestige of the Church in modern Russia where links between Russian nationhood and Orthodoxy are being strenuously reinforced. No less worrisome is a tendency of some Old Believer and Orthodox writers to use the new conditions of freedom to revive past polemics and tired stereotypes.³³

The last decade and a half has also seen the revival of *Edinoverie* in Russia. Thus new works are being produced and old ones being brought back to light. Shleev's history was republished in 2004.³⁴ The most outstanding new product is R. V. Kaurkin and O. A.

²⁹ S. A. Zen'kovskii, *Russkoe staroobriadchestvo*, 2 vols. (Moscow, 2009).

³⁰ S. L. Firsov, *Russkaia tserkov' nakanune peremen* (Moscow, 2002); M. A. Babkin, *Sviashchenstvo i tsarstvo: Rossii, nachalo XX v. - 1918 g.: issledovaniia i materialy* (Moscow, 2011); S. V. Rimskii, *Rossiiskaia tserkov' v epokhu velikikh reform: tserkovnye reformy v Rossii 1860-1870kh godov* (Moscow, 1999).

³¹ A. Kravetskii, *Tserkovnaia missiia v epokhu peremen (mezhdia propoved'iu i dialogom)*. (Moscow, 2012); A. S. Lavrov, *Koldovstvo i religii v Rossii, 1700-1740 gg.* (Moscow, 2000).

³² O. P. Ershova, *Staroobriadchestvo i vlast'* (Moscow, 1999).

³³ Pichugin's savage attack on *Edinoverie* has been republished, with the new editor proclaiming "the book was printed exactly 100 years ago but remains relevant to our times." Pichugin, *O edinoverii*, 6.

³⁴ Simon (Shleev), *Edinoverie v svoem vnutrennem razvitii* (Moscow, 2004).

Pavlova's 2011 monograph, which covers the entire period between 1650 and 1918 and publishes some interesting primary sources.³⁵ However, this work is meant as a general introduction and is therefore often scanty on details. Also problematic is that the bulk of the work focuses on the era between 1761 and 1855. Finally, they have the unfortunate habit of paraphrasing Shleev word for word without footnoting him, thus internalising some of his questionable assumptions. N. A. Zimina's hagiography of the *Edinoverie* leader has gone even further down this regrettable road. It is an altogether uncritical examination that copies and pastes entire paragraphs directly from Shleev's early twentieth century publications.³⁶

Very recently, there has also been a glut of highly informative theses and articles. The three most impressive dissertations are Pavlova's general study, R. A. Maiorov's intellectual biography of the *Edinoverie* priest Ioann Verkhovskii and D. S. Ermakova's regional history of *Edinoverie* in the Urals.³⁷ Nor can I ignore the labours of Aleksandr Palkin, M. N. Suslova, and V. N. Il'in, who have completed excellent studies of the *edinovertsy* in the Urals, Tobol'sk and Tomsk respectively.³⁸ All of these works have much to recommend them, especially the theses' thorough use of previously untouched archival sources. Finally, a conference dedicated to *Edinoverie* was held in 2004 and its published volume contains much useful information.³⁹ However, I would distinguish their works from my own by the particular conceptual framework I am employing. None of them have looked at *Edinoverie*'s development and its changing relationship with the Orthodox Church by examining the interplay between confessionalisation and ritual re-evaluation.

Finally, it behoves me to mention the considerable activities undertaken by the *Edinoverie* communities of Mikhailovskaia sloboda near Moscow and the Nikol'skaia church in Petersburg. The former in particular has been printing a journal since 2002 and

³⁵ Kaurkin and Pavlova, *Edinoverie*

³⁶ N. P. Zimina, *Put' na Golgofu*, 2 vols. (Moscow, 2005).

³⁷ R. A. Maiorov, "Edinoverie i lider ego soedinencheskogo napravleniia vtoroi poloviny XIX veka sviashchennik Ioann Verkhovskii" (Kand. diss., Moskovskii pedagogicheskii gosudarstvennyi universitet, 2008); O. A. Pavlova, "Edinoverie v kontekste pravitel'svennoi i tserkovnoi politiki Rossii v XVIII v. - nachle XX v." (Dissertatsia kandidata istoricheskikh nauk, Nizhegor. gos. un-t im. N. I. Lobachevskogo, 2007); D. S. Ermakova, "Edinovercheskaia tserkov' v Zaurale: XIX -pervaia tret' XX veka" (Dissertatsia kandidata istoricheskikh nauk, Tiumenskii gosudarstvennyi universitet, 2011).

³⁸ A. S. Palkin, "K istorii vnutrenii zhizni edinovercheskikh obshchin Ekaterinburga i Nizhnego Tagila: ot konfrontatsii k ob'edineniiu," *Vestnik museia "Nev'ianskaia ikona"* 4 (2013): 186–97; L. N. Suslova, "Edinoverie v Tobol'skoi gubernii vo vtoroi polovine XIX - nachle XX v.," *Problemy istorii Rossii*, no. 7 (2008): 212–44; V. N. Il'in, "Edinoverie v XIX v. na territorii Tomskoi gubernii," *Izvestiia Altaiskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta* 4–2, no. 76 (2012): 85–91.

³⁹ *Pravoslavnoe Edinoverie v Rossii* (St. Petersburg, 2004).

has recently published online the diary of a *Edinoverie* priest, an extremely rare kind of source.⁴⁰

Summarising the strengths and weaknesses of the historiographical field on *Edinoverie*, much of the scholarship is weighted to the late eighteenth century. This is true of both the old and new works and those in Russian and western languages. Therefore a study that focuses more heavily on the later period is much needed. Modern Russian studies are rapidly breaking into new and interesting territory, although they have yet to acknowledge the value of European historiographical concepts for the study of *Edinoverie* and Orthodoxy. Some of them are also unfortunately limited by a hagiographical approach that renders them uncritical in their examination of key figures. Scholars working in English and other European languages have yet to understand the value of *Edinoverie* as a lens for considering confession building and the relation of Church, state and Old Belief. Students of Old Belief have not realised the fact that *Edinoverie* was in many ways an Old Believer concord within the aegis of the Church. As it was subject to the Church's surveillance and because the *edinovertsy* enjoyed relative freedom of the press, *Edinoverie* produced a substantial amount of relatively accessible sources that offer new light on certain aspects of the history of Old Belief.

Concepts: Confessionalisation and Ritual Re-evaluation

Confessionalisation

Within this thesis, I will make the argument that Russian Orthodoxy underwent confessionalisation between the 1660s and the 1860s. It was that process that made *Edinoverie*'s position in the relation to the Orthodox Church so contested and ambiguous. I will also demonstrate that *Edinoverie* itself was beginning to be confessionalised in the last two decades of imperial Russia. I must therefore explain the term 'confessionalisation.'

The 'confessionalisation paradigm' emerged from the work of Heinz Schilling and Wolfgang Reinhard, two German scholars working on the Reformation in the Holy Roman Empire.⁴¹ Combining G. Oesterreich's work on social disciplining with E. W.

⁴⁰ S. Smirnov, *Zapiski sel'skogo sviashchennika. Dnevnikovye zapisi sviashchennosluzhitelia edinovercheskogo khrama arkhangela Mikhaila sela Mikhailovskaia Sloboda protoiereia Stefana Smirnova, napisannye im samim s 1905 po 1933 god.*, ed. E. Sarancha (Moscow, 2008).

⁴¹ W. Reinhard, "Reformation, Counter-Reformation, and the Early Modern State: A Reassessment," *The Catholic Historical Review* 75, no. 3 (1989): 383–404; H. Schilling, *Religion, Political Culture*

Zeeden's notion of confession building, they developed a concept that sought to turn the immediate aftermath of the Reformation into a crucial phase in Germany's modernisation.⁴² The basic tenets of the confessionalisation concept are as follows. The religious leaders of Lutheranism, Calvinism and Catholicism sought, in the process of battling with each other, to forge unified and distinct confessions that would be able to withstand religious struggle and attract converts. The tools to do so were forming and emphasising distinctive rituals, programmatic statements of faith, the enforcement of these doctrinal statements, propaganda and the suppression of the propaganda of others, using schooling to propagate the faith, the tightening of church discipline, the use of confessionalised language (the names of children is usually given as an example) and, finally integration with the state.⁴³ This last point was particularly important. With the close relationship between church and polity that existed in most German territories, the churches became agents of the state, the priests and ministers the foot soldiers of the magistrate's authority. The princes found in the process a way of tightening control over populations and more closely integrating their territories. Church and state united not just in their drive to render territories religiously uniform but to enforce certain civic ideals and behavioural models.⁴⁴ Although Reinhard and Schilling differ somewhat in terms of the chronology, the starting point of confessionalisation can be seen with Luther's initial reforms in the 1520s and its end at the cessation of the Thirty Years' War in 1648.

I should note some nuances. This combination of confessional integration and the extension of social disciplining form the 'strong' or 'strict' version of confessionalisation. However, as various scholars have tried to apply the concept to other countries, they have frequently either de-emphasised or set aside the relationship to the state. They have continued to call this confessionalisation, although they acknowledge it is a looser definition of the term, a weaker version.⁴⁵

Criticisms of the concept have typically been aimed at the chronology of events, confessionalisation's top-bottom perspective, the tendency to flatten out religious

and the Emergence of Early Modern Society. Essays in German and Dutch History. (Leiden: Brill, 1992).

⁴² For a general introduction, see R. Po-Chia Hsia, *Social Discipline in the Reformation: Central Europe 1550-1750* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989); T. A. Brady, Jr., "'Confessionalization': The Career of a Concept," in J. M. Headley, H. J. Hillerbrand and A. K. Papalas, eds., *Confessionalization in Europe, 1555-1700. Essays in Honour and Memory of Bodo Nischan* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 1-20.

⁴³ Reinhard, "Reformation."

⁴⁴ Schilling, *Religion*.

⁴⁵ Brady, Jr., "'Confessionalization': The Career of a Concept."

differences, and the way in which it pushes non-confessional processes to the side.⁴⁶ I will focus on the first two. Some historians have noted that processes of confessionalisation did not just end in 1648 but rather continued to play out. Etienne Francois has argued that the attempts of state and church to confessionalise populations led to the internalisation of religious difference which continued long after the pressure from the top ceased. Thus a real sense of confessional difference was very much alive at the beginning of the nineteenth century.⁴⁷ J. F. Harrington and H. W. Smith have also suggested that confessionalization remained active in the nineteenth century, colouring emergent discourses of national identity.⁴⁸ In regards to confessionalisation's top down approach, some have argued it is all too simplistic, neglecting the agency of subject populations to resist and appropriate disciplining measures from church and state. Marc Forster has convincingly shown that confessionalization might even be a bottom-up process. In his study of Catholic Germany, he has shown how a long-standing adherence to a popular Catholicism among peasants was the trigger for the confessionalising of the institutions above them.⁴⁹ Therefore many have argued that Schilling and Reinhard's confessionalisation was not so much an actual process but rather a blueprint for reform that was far less successful at moulding populations than either author appreciated.⁵⁰

Can confessionalisation be applied successfully to Russian Orthodoxy? The answer from historians has been a resounding 'yes.' Freeze has certainly argued for confessionalisation in nineteenth century Russia.⁵¹ Dixon, although he does not make use of the term, has done much the same by suggesting that the modernisation of the Church and its closer integration into the Russian state was connected with the pressure of competing confessions.⁵² Marsden has shown that combating Old Belief was integral to the modernisation of the Russian state in latter half of Nicholas I's reign.

⁴⁶ For clear criticism, see U. Lotz-Huemann, "The Concept of 'Confessionalization': A Historiographical Paradigm in Dispute," *Memoria y Civilizacion* 4 (2001): 93–114.

⁴⁷ For this description, see T.M. Safley, "Multiconfessionalism: A Brief Introduction," in T. M. Safley, ed., *A Companion to Multiconfessionalism in the Early Modern World* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011), 1–19.

⁴⁸ J. F. Harrington and H. W. Smith, "Confessionalization, Community, and State Building in Germany, 1555-1870," *The Journal of Modern History* 69, no. 1 (1997): 77–101.

⁴⁹ M. R. Forster, *Catholic Revival in the Age of the Baroque: Religious Identity in Southwest Germany, 1550-1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

⁵⁰ Lotz-Huemann, "The Concept of 'Confessionalization'."

⁵¹ G. L. Freeze, "Russian Orthodoxy: Church, People, and Politics in Imperial Russia," in D. Lieven, ed., *Cambridge History of Russia*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 284–305.

⁵² S. Dixon, "The Russian Orthodox Church in Imperial Russia, 1721-1917," in M. Angold, ed., *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, vol. 5 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 325–47.

However, there is a question of chronology. When did confessionalisation start? A. S. Bruning has raised doubts about its applicability to the late seventeenth century, arguing that neither the Old Believers nor the Uniates were sufficiently numerous to motivate change, that the struggle with the schism resembles a traditional battle with heresy more than a process of modernisation, and that any confession building that did occur had a limited impact.⁵³ This justified caution has not stopped other historians from utilising the concept in the early modern period. S. Plokhly has argued for confessionalisation taking place in Cossack Ukraine in the early seventeenth century and Barbara Skinner has posited that a fully formed Orthodox confession emerged by the middle of the seventeenth century. She has also used confessionalisation to explain the development of the Uniate Church in the Polish Lithuanian Commonwealth in the eighteenth century.⁵⁴ Georg Michels has demonstrated that the liturgical reforms of 1667 led to an expansion and modernisation of the Russian Church's administrative mechanisms. Whilst he notes that the notion of Old Belief as a homogenous and numerically expansive movement existed purely in the minds of churchmen and courtiers until the 1720s, this did not stop it from motivating most of the reforms they enacted.⁵⁵ Finally A. S. Lavrov has also deployed the concept to analyse the battle of Church and state against superstition in the early eighteenth century.⁵⁶

Dixon and Freeze too have shown the depths of confessionalisation's roots in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. What they note is that there was a change in motivation under Peter I and Catherine II where the tsars and churchmen were more interested in quashing irrationality in the populace rather than combating denominational foes.⁵⁷ It was the need to fight religious ignorance that motivated them in expanding the ecclesiastical administrative apparatus, not the struggle with heterodoxy. Peter and Catherine, the latter more strongly than the former, believed that limited toleration was the way in which to make the Old Believers useful for the state rather than enforcing

⁵³ A. Bruning, "Confessionalization in the *Slavia Orthodoxa* (Belorussia, Ukraine, Russia)? – Potential and Limits of a Western Historiographical Concept," in T. Bremer, ed., *Religion and the Conceptual Boundary in Central and Eastern Europe. Encounters of Faiths*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 87–89.

⁵⁴ S. Plokhly, *The Cossacks and Religion in Early Modern Ukraine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); B. Skinner, *The Eastern Church Between Poland and Russia: Identity and Conflict in the Era of Partition* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2009).

⁵⁵ Michels, *At War with the Church* G. Michels, "Ruling Without Mercy: Seventeenth-Century Russian Bishops and Their Officials," *Kritika* 4, no. 3 (2003): 515–42.

⁵⁶ Lavrov, *Koldovstvo*.

⁵⁷ G. L. Freeze, "Rechristianization of Russia: The Church and Popular Religion, 1750-1850," *Studia Slavica Finlandensia* 6 (1990): 107.

religious homogeneity. However, the period between both of their reigns (1725 to 1762) was an era of religious persecution against both Old Belief and other religions, as the campaign of forcible conversion against the pagan Finnic tribes of the Volga in the 1740s demonstrates.⁵⁸ The fear of religious contest did not vanish in the eighteenth century as a motivation for reform. Rather, it was of secondary importance. *Edinoverie* demonstrates this precisely. The churchmen of Catherine's reign were more interested in fighting superstition than the schism but when *Edinoverie* posed the problem of allowing the old rites into the Church, it provoked a rash of confessional anxiety that profoundly shaped the formulation of the settlement in 1800.

Equally, the Church and state did not possess the means to confessionalise the population before the early nineteenth century. However, the lack of mechanisms did not mean the absence of a confessionalising mind set among churchmen. Confessionalisation must be seen as a centuries long process in both the cases of Russia and Western European countries. It was not instantaneous and the intentions of those carrying it out underwent fluctuations. What happened in the beginning of the nineteenth century in Russia was the completion of a much longer change. It was a shift in priorities, pace and scope, not the emergence of confessionalisation. I therefore feel justified in making the argument that the Russian Church was confessionalising from 1667 onwards, a project that reached its apotheosis between 1825 and 1864.

Can the concept be applied to *Edinoverie*? Skinner's example is instructive since *Edinoverie* and the Uniate Church are roughly analogous cases. She has argued that the eighteenth century saw a process whereby the Uniates sought to distinguish themselves both from Orthodoxy and mainstream Catholicism whilst at the same time strengthening their administrative capabilities. This is certainly what we see after 1905 in the reform programme of Simeon Shleev and his associates. That scheme also contains all of the elements mentioned by Schilling and Reinhard. The difference is that these *edinovertsy* did not seek to strengthen the control of the state. However, it is perfectly possible to apply the weaker version of confessionalisation proposed by scholars who have sought to use the concept in cases other than Reformation Germany. They too downplayed the extent to which confessionalisation was encouraged by the state or expanded its reach.

⁵⁸ P. Werth, "Coercion and Conversion: Violence and the Mass Baptism of the Volga Peoples, 1740 - 1755," *Kritika* 4, no. 3 (2003): 543–69.

Within this thesis, I will deploy the term confessionalisation in two ways: the first to denote the modernisation of the Church in response to external pressure between 1666 and 1864 and the second to designate a plan to form a *Edinoverie* confession after 1905. I will refer to the latter as ‘separatist confessionalisation’ to distinguish it from the former. Two other terms I use that are related to confessionalisation are ‘confessional assimilation’ and ‘confessional integration.’ From the beginning, *Edinoverie* sat outside of the Orthodox confession and the Church was aware that this was problematic. Between 1800 and 1918, two plans existed to end this situation. The first was proposed by Metropolitan Platon and involved the *edinovertsy* surrendering their distinctive rites over time: this is what I entitle ‘confessional assimilation.’ The second scheme originated in the 1870s and was formulated by Professor Nikolai Subbotin. This suggested that the *edinovertsy* did not have to give up their rites to become part of the Orthodox confession. This I call ‘confessional integration.’ These two ideals defined Orthodoxy and *Edinoverie* differently: they had divergent conceptions of the value of rite in the formation of the boundaries of the Orthodox confession. Both existed until 1918, although it was confessional integration that became Synodal policy in the 1880s.

Ritual Re-evaluation

The importance of ritual in confessionalisation has already been mentioned. As Edward Muir has stated for Europe in the sixteenth century, ‘beyond the reformers’ polemical pamphlets and the preachers’ learned sermons, which established the theoretical groundwork, the Reformation was in practice a battle over the right forms of sacramental rituals.’⁵⁹ Bodo Nischan in particular spent a great deal of time looking at the role that rituals played in developing separate Lutheran and Calvinist confessional identities while Susan Kurant-Nunn has researched the ways in which rites of passage were transformed in the Reformation so that they brought communities under the supervision of both church and state.⁶⁰ Ritual was the most visible way in which individuals and groups displayed and confirmed their denominational belonging and as such were potent tools in the hands of confessionalising churches. Ritual was one of the main causes of the schism and the locus of contention between Orthodoxy and *Edinoverie*.

⁵⁹ E. Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

⁶⁰ S. Karant-Nunn, *The Reformation of Ritual: An Interpretation of Early Modern Germany* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997); B. Nischan, *Lutherans and Calvinists in the Age of Confessionalism* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999).

Whilst the role of rituals as building blocks for confessional identities was highly significant and will frequently be discussed within the thesis, there is another aspect that we must also consider: attitude to ritual. Peter Burke has argued ‘if historians shift their ground from ritual acts to attitudes to ritual, then they will have a story to tell which is just as dramatic as the old one told by Spencer and Weber, Gluckman and Shils [about the disenchantment of the modern world].’⁶¹

Edinoverie could not have been created had it not been for a change in attitude towards ritual in the Orthodox Church. A shift had to come about whereby the Old Believer rites could be allowed to exist in the Church. In the period prior to 1762, rituals were thought of as being indistinguishable from dogmas. They were thus immutable and could not be changed. In such a conception, the external (ritual) was prioritised above the internal (conviction): the former was the definitive symbol of the doctrinal correctness of the latter. Ritual was thus a central element of the confessionalisation project. Making the cross with three fingers rather than two (the Old Believer way) was thought of as being a sign of belonging to Orthodoxy. However, with the accession of Catherine the Great and the extension of religious toleration to the Old Believers, the leaders of the Church formulated the ritual re-evaluation as a theological justification of the Empress’ policies. Ritual was divorced from dogma and turned into a ‘middling thing.’ Thus the ground was set for *Edinoverie*, a settlement that would allow the old rituals alongside the new ones in the Church. This was deeply problematic for the Church’s confessionalisation project, which distinguished its rituals against those of the schism. Because of *Edinoverie*, the Church’s ability to define the confession through ritual was compromised. However, the 1800 rules of Platon did not mean the death of confessionalisation. Indeed, the caution in Platon’s terms meant that the downgrading of ritual’s importance had opponents throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

This is analogous to the insights garnered by anthropologists researching the way in which the perception of ritual was transformed in sixteenth and seventeenth century Europe. As Talal Asad has noted, in medieval Europe ‘there could be no radical disjunction between outer behaviour and inner motive, between social rituals and individual sentiments, between activities that are expressive and those that are

⁶¹ P. Burke, *The Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Italy. Essays on Perception and Communication* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 224.

technical.⁶² Confessionalisation heightened this problem by turning rituals into markers of identity: ‘many religious practices earlier considered *adiaphora* (indifferent matters), now became treated as marks of demarcation between the emerging Protestant confessional churches and at the same time were politicized as the early modern state sought to impose greater social control.’⁶³ However, the consequences of the Reformation and ever increasing contacts with non-Christian civilisations led to a breaking down of the intimate connection between ritual and belief. The Chinese rites controversy, for instance, led some to question how far a ritual, such as ancestor worship, impinged on one’s ability to be a Christian.⁶⁴ Thus, ritual came to be disconnected from religious belief or internal conviction and increasingly the adjective ‘mere’ was connected to ritual by secular writers who came to see external behaviour as something that could be subjected to manipulation and therefore a tool in projecting falsity.⁶⁵ Theologians, for their part, began to consign ritual to the category of *adiaphora*, matters indifferent. This was particularly the case after the Thirty Years War when the need for confessional co-existence became paramount. Ritual became deconfessionalised and the view of religious authorities shifted towards moulding inner belief. The consequences of this shift have been with us ever since. As Muir has stated, ‘the modern muddle about ritual is a legacy of the ritual revolution of the sixteenth century, which shifted attention from the emotive power of rituals to questions about their meaning.’⁶⁶

I call the disconnection between dogma and rite the ‘ritual re-evaluation.’ I have not used the term ‘ritual revolution’ preferred by Muir because his analysis extends to civil society whilst mine limits itself to the Church. In such a context, ‘revolution’ seems far too grand a term. Equally, the Church was never utterly indifferent to rite nor did it grant absolute freedom in ritual matters. The shift enabled two forms of ritual, and two alone, to coexist within Russian Orthodoxy. I also avoid Kurant-Nunn’s term ‘reformation of ritual’ because it carries unfortunate connotations of the events in sixteenth century Europe. Ritual re-evaluation states precisely what the phenomenon was, a re-evaluating of the importance and meaning of ritual that led it to becoming less central when compared to internal belief.

⁶² T. Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (London: John Hopkins University Press, 1993), 63.

⁶³ J. M. Headley, “Introduction,” in J. M. Headley, H. J. Hillerbrand and A. K. Papalas, eds., *Confessionalization in Europe, 1555-1700. Essays in Honour and Memory of Bodo Nischan* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), xvii.

⁶⁴ Muir, *Ritual*, 195–197.

⁶⁵ Burke, *Historical Anthropology*, 227.

⁶⁶ Muir, *Ritual*, 299.

Ritual re-evaluation and tolerance usually go hand in hand and therefore it stands juxtaposed to confessionalisation. Whereas confessionalisation emphasises the significance of ritual as a marker of religious identity in order to separate denominations, ritual re-evaluation devalues it in order to forge grounds for compromise and coexistence. It is not surprising therefore that we find ritual re-evaluation and *adiaphora*, the theological tool used to realise the consequences of changes in attitude, are highly prominent at moments when toleration and co-existence are prioritised above confessionalisation. We see it in the Augsburg Interim of 1548 when ‘Emperor Charles V required Protestants to acquiesce in an array of Catholic ceremonies deemed indifferent with regard to salvation’ and again after 1648 when monarchs tired of religious violence started to promote limited degrees of tolerance.⁶⁷ Conversely, ritual re-evaluation is absent at moments of intense confessionalisation such as in the Lutheran Formula of Concord in 1577, which argued that rites could not be called *adiaphora* when the aim was to forge a compromise position with other confessions.⁶⁸ By extending the confessionalisation paradigm into the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, we come to the realisation that the ritual re-evaluation was not entirely successful after 1648. It did not replace confessionalisation but rather the two processes continued to run side by side, often conflicting with each other. They are the two contradictory forces that help us explain the changing relationship between *Edinoverie* and the Church.

Terminology

Since terminology was a sensitive matter in the confessionalised debates that I examine, I must qualify and explain my usage.

In regards to my main subject, I will always refer to it as *Edinoverie*, to its adherents as *edinovertsy* and to individual believers as either *edinoverets* (masculine) or *edinoverka* (feminine). It should be noted that that the word *Edinoverie* was not always used. Between 1784 and 1800 the terms *soglasie* (harmony), *soedinenie* (union), *soglasniki* and *soedinenttsy* were standards. Orthodox writers also used the description ‘the *Edinoverie* Church’ (*edinovercheskaia tserkov*) but this could provoke dissent among *edinovertsy* who detested the idea that *Edinoverie* represented a distinct church. The label

⁶⁷ I. Hunter, *The Secularisation of the Confessional State. The Political Thought of Christian Thomasius* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 122.

⁶⁸ For a discussion of *adiaphora* and confessionalisation, see L. D. Peterson, “Johann Pfeffinger’s Treatises of 1550 in Defense of *Adiaphora*: ‘High Church’ Lutheranism and Confessionalization in Albertine Saxony,” in J. M. Headley, H. J. Hillerbrand and A. K. Papalas, eds., *Confessionalization in Europe, 1555-1700. Essays in Honour and Memory of Bodo Nischan* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 91–106.

‘Orthodox Old Belief’ (*pravoslavnoe staroobriadchestvo*) became popular among some *edinovertsy* in the late nineteenth century. The latter term was deeply contentious because it came to signify agreement with the radical reform project that emerged in 1905 and also because the term Old Belief suggested that the Orthodox were ‘new believers’ and thus undermined the antiquity of the Nikonian ritual compact. This is a key point in theological terms wherein Orthodoxy is identified as a Christian faith with an unbroken connection the early Church. To challenge the age of rituals was to challenge one’s connection with the canons.

Churchmen and *edinovertsy* also used a number of terms to distinguish Orthodoxy from *Edinoverie*. Often used was the name *obshchee pravoslavie* meaning ‘common’ or ‘general Orthodoxy.’ Other terms were *velikorossiskoe pravoslavie* (Great Russian Orthodoxy) or *gospodstvuiushchaia tserkov’* (the predominant church or, more loosely, the official church). These last two labels did on occasion cause upset among Russian Orthodox churchmen when they were applied by *edinovertsy* since both implied an official and bureaucratic understanding of the Church.

‘Old Belief’ is the commonly accepted English translation for the term *staroobriadchestvo*. Literally translated, the word means old ritualism, a sign of how fundamental rite was for characterising the schism. We must also be aware that Old Belief describes an extremely diverse phenomenon. By the end of the seventeenth century, the Old Believers had divided into two basic groups, the priestly (*popovtsy*) and the priestless (*bespopovtsy*). By the time of the Russian Revolution, there were an astounding number of concords under the general term Old Belief, each with their own particular practices and religious convictions.⁶⁹ Perhaps the only points that united them all were their general opposition to the Orthodox Church and their preference for elements of the pre-Nikonian liturgy and texts. Thus when I use the term Old Belief, I do so in the most general of ways and am aware that it does not do justice to the full complexity of the movement. If I have a particular group or concord in mind, then I will specify which ones I am talking about. Some will recur repeatedly and it is worth mentioning them here. The *beglopopovtsy* were those who used fugitive priests on the run from the ecclesiastical and secular authorities. The Belaia Krinitsa hierarchy, also confusingly known as the Austrians, was a priestly Old Believer group who had obtained bishops from a rogue Greek Metropolitan in 1846. They were based in Bosnia, then part

⁶⁹ For a description of the main types, see Robson, *Old Believers*, 29–39.

of the Austro-Hungary, hence their peculiar name. The *spasovtsy* were priestless Old Believers who had the notorious practice of marrying and baptising their children in Orthodox churches, principally as a way of legitimising them in the eyes of the state. The *pomortsy* were priestless Old Believers who originated in Vyg in the Russian north and were initially hostile to marriage and procreation.

The Church unrelentingly referred to Old Belief as the schism (*raskol'*) and its adherents as schismatics (*raskol'niki*). The *edinovertsy* also sometimes referred to it as schismatic Old Belief (*raskol'nichestvuiushchee staroobriadchestvo*), another way in which confessionalisation crept into terminology. Here the doctrinal unity of *Edinoverie* with the Church was used to distinguish it from the schismatic wielders of the old rites.

A final term I must deal with is 'conversion.' There were limitations throughout the period regarding the right of the Orthodox to join *Edinoverie*. Those in favour of such prohibitions would refer directly to 'conversion' (*perekhod, obrashchenie* and their attendant verbs) and sometimes even 'apostasy' (*otpadenie*). Those who saw no reason to impose limits between Orthodoxy and *Edinoverie* and who saw both as constituting a single confession used the neutral word *perechislenie*, meaning enumeration or transfer. Again, this is a clear instance of the confessionalisation of language and we will see in several chapters how these terms both reflected and shaped religious differences. Therefore the reader should be aware that when I use the terms 'conversion' or 'transfer' that these were deeply contested descriptions that reflected opposed confessional viewpoints.

Structure

The thesis is divided into two halves, the first studying the period between 1800 and 1886 and the latter examining the first two decades of the twentieth century.

Chapter I elaborates on confessionalisation and the ritual re-evaluation in the Russian context and shows how these two forces interacted in the foundation of *Edinoverie* between 1780 and 1800. The clash between the two led to the contradictory rules of Platon.

Chapter II briefly analyses the reigns of Alexander I and Nicholas I to demonstrate how *Edinoverie* was dependent on the policies of the state towards Old Belief and secondly to show how coercion profoundly changed the character of *Edinoverie*. This second element will be further fleshed out in chapter IV.

Chapter III considers how the Synod attempted to integrate *Edinoverie* into the Orthodox confession between 1864 and 1886 in the face of mounting problems both from within and without.

Chapters IV and V take a more thematic approach in order to understand how a sense of religious difference was fostered between the *edinovertsy* and the Orthodox. Chapter IV does this on a large scale, bringing in examples from a large time period and from all over the Russian Empire whilst chapter V concentrates on Nizhnii Novgorod between 1870 and 1905.

Chapters VI and VII look at the way in which *Edinoverie* and the Church reacted to the sharp shock of the Edict of Religious Toleration on 17 April 1905. It follows the course of the reform programmes offered by the Synod and by the *edinovertsy* themselves. Chapter VII will make the argument that Simeon Shleev's reform plan amounted to nothing other than the creation of a *Edinoverie* confession.

Chapter VIII analyses the ways in which the Orthodox Church tried to use ceremonies to create a sense of confessional integration but was constantly undermined by Simeon Shleev, the Old Believers, the secular press and the fact that ceremony could not undo the real problems with *Edinoverie* that had manifested themselves in the previous century.

Chapter IX looks at the final attempt to renew *Edinoverie* in the Church Council of 1917-18. Confronted by the radicalism of Shleev's project and the adamant refusal of some churchmen to accept that path of reform, the Council devised a new settlement intended to tread a middle way between the two opposed camps.

Contribution

The reader might legitimately ask the question: why spend an entire study focussing on the fate of a few hundred thousand semi-schismatics who sat on the periphery of the Orthodox confession? Despite being tiny, it was extremely controversial and generated an incredible amount of activity. No other group of a similar size could claim to have been the subject of so much debate within the higher echelons of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Why was *Edinoverie* so controversial and controversial? This relates very much to the concept of confessionalisation. The creation of confessions relies heavily on the ritual dimension, since these offer a visible way of distinguishing one creed from another. Orthodoxy was no different. The Nikonian rituals clearly set it apart from Old Belief.

Edinoverie's very existence challenged that process since it brought the old rites into the Church and therefore initiated a process whereby ritual lost its capacity to separate Russian Orthodoxy from the schism. A new method had to be sought and the Church eventually settled on using attitude to ritual as the marker of ascribed Orthodox confessional identity. The ritual re-evaluation itself came to be the dividing line between Church and schism. Thus, *Edinoverie* caused a change in the way in which Orthodox identity was officially conceived. This thesis is one of the first to examine the ritual aspect of confessionalisation in the Russian context and the role it played in the development of Orthodox identity at the level of policy making. The fact that a ritual re-evaluation occurred within Russian Orthodoxy makes it comparable to the experiences of western churches following the turn to toleration in the middle of the seventeenth century, an important insight when one considers how often commentators have placed the experience of the Orthodox Church outside general European developments. It also undermines the common stereotype that Orthodoxy values liturgical ritual before all else. As I will show this was not the case since the Church downgraded the significance of ritual in the pursuit of bringing schismatics back into the fold.

The focus on confessionalisation in general allows us to compare Orthodoxy and Russia itself with other European cases. Certainly, confessionalisation in Russia had its peculiarities but it broadly arose and developed in the same way as in the Catholic and Protestant West. However, I have gone further than simply establishing a comparison. Few European studies have yet pursued the consequences of confessionalisation into the twentieth century to understand how it interacts with forces of modernity like industrialisation, urbanisation and secularisation. Freeze and Dixon have done precisely this in their research and I follow their example, using the case study of *Edinoverie* to bring out the particular problems that confessionalisation faced in the modern era. Equally, applying the concept to *Edinoverie* after 1905 demonstrates that confessionalisation does not just occur to state churches but also to some groups canonically subordinate to them. Thus I suggest that confessionalisation might have a broader use as a concept since it can be applied to other marginal denominations.

Edinoverie was a microcosm of the Russian Orthodox Church. The difficulties that *Edinoverie* had with the education and payment of priests, relations with the bishops and their consistories, and the bureaucratic Synodal order were also ones that plagued Orthodoxy. Both of them became dependent on the coercive policies of the state to defend their flocks and persecute their enemies whilst dealing with the increased

government intervention that was necessary corollary of confessionalisation. When coercion dwindled and then finally evaporated in the wake of 1905, both *Edinoverie* and the Russian Orthodox Church faced the unenviable position of a religious monopoly whose exclusive access to a market had been revoked. The reaction of both reflects the general position of European state churches in the late twentieth century where religious toleration and freedom of conscience became the norm. However, *Edinoverie* felt these problems all the more keenly because it was so close to the Old Believers and thus faced the threat of absolute redundancy and numerical collapse.

This is a problem that still faces *Edinoverie*. The question is, what role can it play today and how will the increasingly close identification of the Russian state with the Church affect its fortunes. Can it function in the religiously plural atmosphere of modern Russia? A historical investigation of *Edinoverie* at this juncture is sagacious if we are to understand what confronts it today and what might lie ahead of it in the future.

Finally, the thesis offers thoughts on the general problem of how governments have dealt with the issue of religious dissent since the sixteenth century. Tolerance, modernisation and confessionalisation are part of a problematic that has been confronted throughout modern European history. Modernising states seek to increase their control and their ability to exploit financial and human resources. One solution is to seek uniformity, to persecute and even destroy groups who exist outside the reach of official institutions, both religious and secular. The second is tolerance, allowing diversity for the sake of bringing dissent and difference under the umbrella of state surveillance and utilising them for various *raisons d'état*.

After the emergence of Old Belief, the Russian state swung between both alternatives and was unable to settle on any single path for any lengthy period of time. This created a dynamic between tolerance and confessionalisation. *Edinoverie* was born at the centre of that dynamic, the product of a confessionalising Church seeking accommodation with a relatively tolerant state. Studying *Edinoverie* therefore enables us to see the way in which a state church tried to resolve heterodoxy but was undermined by the dialectic between confession building and toleration. *Edinoverie* also raises the question of whether the attempt to deal with religious heterogeneity by assimilating and accommodating difference under the umbrella of an official institution can function as a middle way between tolerance and confessionalisation. The answer is not encouraging but through its study we might at least come to a better understanding of why the middle way failed and what lessons that failure can teach us.

Part I

The Paradoxes of Platon

A man that is an heretick after the first and
second admonition reject – Tituts 3:10

I: Beyond the Transparent Veil: the Ritual Re-Evaluation and the Origins of

Edinoverie

Ritual is the free poetry of symbols or words that the Church, an organic and living unity, uses to express its knowledge about the divine truths, its limitless love to its Creator and Saviour and, finally, the love that connects Christians with each other on earth and in heaven. Ritual by essence is changeable: it is no more than a transparent veil that envelops dogma, which is by essence unchanging. – A. S. Khomiakov, c. 1844 - 1845.¹

It is not unity in rituals but unity in faith that creates the spiritual union of churches and believers. - Archbishop Nikephoros (Theotokis), 1780.²

Introduction

In December 1798, Ivan Ivanovich Milov, merchant and purveyor of silks to the imperial court, applied to Gavriil (Petrov), Metropolitan of St. Petersburg, to be allowed to join the Orthodox Church whilst being permitted to perform the Old Believer liturgy. Simultaneously, he successfully petitioned that the schismatic chapel in his home be converted into a church and a priest be provided. On 29 June 1799, the new church was blessed in the name of St. Nicholas the Miracle Worker, thus becoming the Nikol'skaia church, although its parishioners knew it more informally as Milovskaia in honour of its founder. With this act, Milov and Gavriil established the first *Edinoverie* parish in St Petersburg.³ Just over a year later, Emperor Paul attended a service at the church and invited the parishioners to attend a service in the chapel of the imperial court. Courtiers and converts prayed together, the latter using their pre-Nikonian ritual. Paul accepted a two-fingered blessing from the priest and later donated a bell and a cross to the Milovskaia church.⁴

Paul timed his visit to the Milovskaia church with a good deal of precision. Less than a month earlier, on 27 October 1800, he had signed an edict which established *Edinoverie* as a permanent fixture of the Russian Orthodox Church and also set down a series of conditions which Old Believers had to agree to if they were to be accepted in the Church. Metropolitan Platon (Levshin) of Moscow was responsible for this new edict, which he

¹ A. S. Khomiakov, *Tserkov' odna* (Moscow, 2004), 171.

² Quoted in G. L. Bruess, *Religion, Identity and Empire: A Greek Archbishop in the Russia of Catherine the Great* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 153.

³ V. V. Nil'skii, *Istoriko-statisticheskoe opisanie stolichnykh edinovercheskikh tserkvei: nikol'skoi, chto v Zakhar'evskoi ulitse, izvestnoi pod imenem milovskoi, i nikol'skoi, chto v Nikolaevskoi ulitse*. (St Petersburg, 1880), 9–11.

⁴ I. N. Lapotnikov, "Imperator Pavel i staroobriadtsy," *Russkaia starina* XXII (1878): 173–76.

had formulated in response to a request from a group of priestly Old Believers within his diocese. The sixteen conditions and two supplementary opinions ('the rules of Metropolitan Platon') formed the basis for *Edinoverie*'s existence until their replacement in 1918. Paul's visit and his subsequent generosity to the new Petersburg parish was his stamp of approval on the new arrangement, a move intended to symbolically affirm close connections between the throne, the Church and the new flock of repentant schismatics.

However, the neat symbolism of Paul's beneficence covers a deeper struggle between Church and state in the late eighteenth century. Since the reign of Catherine the Great, the Russian state had embarked on a general policy of religious toleration and in doing so had backed the creation of *Edinoverie* as an alternative to campaigns of coercive conversion against the schism.⁵ It saw unity in faith as a way to bring the Old Believers under closer surveillance and mobilise them for ambitious resettlement projects in southern Russia.⁶

This conflicted with the beginnings of a confessionalisation project that defined Russian Orthodoxy against Old Belief. As in Western Europe during and immediately after the Reformation, ritual was a crucial way in which the Orthodox Church distinguished its confession from other religious groups. It functioned as a clear-cut sign of who belonged to the flock and who did not.⁷ Allowing Old Believers to enter into the Church whilst keeping their old rites meant that two forms of ritual could be allowed, thus damaging the role it played in signifying religious identity. Closely connected to the state, leading churchmen had little choice but to justify the new policy of unity in theological terms. This they did by denuding ritual of its former dogmatic importance, transforming it into a matter of secondary significance. However, when it came to realising this theoretical commitment in practice, leading churchmen proved reluctant to act, concerned about relinquishing the ritual markers that helped denote and define Orthodoxy.

This chapter explores how confessionalisation and toleration interacted to form the 1800 settlement that created *Edinoverie*. In doing so, it will be necessary to examine how attitudes to ritual changed in the late eighteenth century to make *Edinoverie* possible in

⁵ Toleration certainly did not extend to the Uniates as Russia expanded into Ukraine and Poland. See L. Wolff, "The Uniate Church and the Partitions of Poland: Religious Survival in an Age of Enlightened Absolutism," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 26, no. 1/4 (2002/2003): 153–255 and B. Skinner, *The Eastern Church Between Poland and Russia: Identity and Conflict in the Era of Partition* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2009).

⁶ P. Pera, "Edinoverie. Storia di un tentativo di integrazione dei vecchi credenti all'interno dell'ortodossia," *Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa* 20, no. 2 (1984): 295.

⁷ For the case of ritual and Protestant identity, see B. Nischan, *Lutherans and Calvinists in the Age of Confessionalism* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), 142–158.

the first place. The ultimate result of this interplay between ritual, confession and tolerance was a deeply problematic edict riddled with paradoxes that were to plague *Edinoverie* throughout its existence. It will also provide insight into a telling instance of Church-state relations in Russia and how changing attitudes to the schism in the latter necessarily provided challenges to the former's policies.

Ritual and Confession

Ritual

In medieval Europe, ritual act and internal state were often conflated categories. The Reformation initially helped to increase the importance of rituals through their association with denominational identity: 'much like the Lutherans, the Reformed thus had come to see church rituals as a means, first, to delineate themselves from other denominations and, second, to build greater confessional loyalty and cohesion.'⁸ A rite was a physical emblem of confessional belonging.⁹ However, the stalemate of the Thirty Year's War led to a need for confessional co-existence. Theologians and statesmen began to consign ritual to the category of *adiaphora*, matters indifferent. In this way, ritual behaviour was no longer necessarily considered as a marker of religious orthodoxy and thus there was no need for religious groups to fight over it.¹⁰ Ritual came to be disconnected from religious belief and internal conviction. As Edward Muir states, 'although the number of rituals has not declined, their status in society and their ability to present the sacred have been radically demoted as a consequence of the ritual disputes of the early modern period.'¹¹

In Russia, the idea of reducing the significance of ritual did not make any inroads until the last third of the eighteenth century. In 1551, the Stoglav Council made a telling prescription on the matter of making the sign of the cross when blessing one's self and others: 'if anyone does not bestow a blessing with two fingers the way Christ did, or does not make the sign of the cross [on himself] with two fingers, the Holy Fathers have said

⁸ Nischan, *Lutherans*, 148.

⁹ For baptism and its connections with Lutheran identity, see M. J. Halvorson, "Theology, Ritual, and Confessionalization: The Making and Meaning of Lutheran Baptism in Reformation Germany, 1520-1816" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Washington, 2001).

¹⁰ For adiaphora and ritual in the Reformation, see L. D. Peterson, "Johann Pfeffinger's Treatises of 1550 in Defense of Adiaphora: 'High Church' Lutheranism and Confessionalization in Albertine Saxony," in J. M. Headley, H. J. Hillerbrand and A. K. Papalas, eds., *Confessionalization in Europe, 1555-1700. Essays in Honour and Memory of Bodo Nischan* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 91-106 and I. Hunter, *The Secularisation of the Confessional State. The Political Thought of Christian Thomasius* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 122-123.

¹¹ E. Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 295.

that he will be anathematized.’¹² Consequently, if an individual failed to perform the ritual correctly, then they were to be subject to anathema and cast out from the Church. One form of ritual was therefore directly connected to doctrinal orthodoxy whilst anything else amounted to nothing other than a form of heresy.

Indeed, this was not simply a connection between categories but a complete conflation wherein ritual and dogma were held to be indistinguishable from one another. Ritual was religious truth and vice versa. Dogmas, the sacred inheritance of the Gospels, ecumenical councils and the Church fathers, were immutable. Change was heretical, a deviation from the divinely ordained order. Holding ritual to be synonymous with dogma meant that any alterations to ritual forms were dangerous and destructive. Also, in conflating ritual with dogma, the Church made ritual deviance into an issue of its authority. To control and define ritual was to control and define dogma and thus the very bases of the Orthodox faith. This granted ritual a tremendous exclusionary power to define who was within its flock. In this sense, it became a way of distinguishing correct Orthodoxy from deviations and heresies. It could integrate the flock into a single relatively homogenous body whilst firmly excluding those who sought to challenge the authority of the Church.

It should be emphasised that the Russian Church did not necessarily inherit this understanding of ritual from Orthodoxy itself. Some of the Church Fathers did distinguish between rite and dogma. Under such an understanding, the Ecumenical Church has always allowed its autocephalous branches freedom to determine their own ritual compacts. Neither of these traditions was dead in the seventeenth century, as a 1655 letter from Patriarch Paisos of Constantinople to Patriarch Nikon demonstrates. The Greek told Nikon that rite was not the equivalent of dogma and therefore he should be cautious that liturgical reform did not cause a breach in Church peace.¹³ However, it would appear that such a conception was not present either in the Stoglav Council or in Nikon’s thinking: Paisos’ sage advice was ignored. It was only with the revival of patristic scholarship in the mid nineteenth century that older Orthodox traditions began to filter through, helping to provoke the debates on ritual freedom that I will examine in chapter III.¹⁴

¹² Quoted in J. E. Kollmann, “The Moscow Stoglav (‘Hundred Chapters’) Church Council of 1551” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1978), 298.

¹³ P. Meyendorff, *Russia, Ritual and Reform: Liturgical Reforms of Nikon in the Seventeenth Century* (New York: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1990), 55–59.

¹⁴ For the revival of patristics and Church history, see S. Dixon, “The Russian Orthodox Church in Imperial Russia, 1721-1917,” in M. Angold, ed., *The Cambridge History of Christianity*. Vol. 5, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 332–335.

Dogma and ritual were to remain conflated until the 1760s, at least as far as the Church itself was concerned. What changed in the mid seventeenth century was not attitude to ritual but rather the form of ritual that was conflated with dogma. Patriarch Nikon and his advisors came to the conclusion that the two fingered sign of the cross and various other liturgical rites had departed from the Greek originals. If rituals were dogma and dogma was unchanging, then the Russians had clearly deviated not only in rituals terms but in a dogmatic sense as well. Nikon, backed by Patriarch Macarios III of Antioch and Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich, launched on a campaign to eradicate the Russian innovations and restore the pristine rituals (and therefore the presence of dogmatic truth). This meant changing the spelling of some words (for instance the name of Jesus Christ), altering the number of fingers used in the sign of the cross from two to three and other seemingly superficial changes to the liturgical order.¹⁵

The most important consequence of this process was a series of anathemas imposed firstly by Macarios in 1656 and then by the Great Moscow Council in 1666-7.¹⁶ These anathematised the two-fingered sign of the cross and other old rites, thus excluding their adherents from the Church and creating the Old Believer schism. The Stoglav Council was also anathematised for having legitimised the ‘deviations’ from Greek practices. The problem was not that the leading Old Believers and the Nikonian Church were divided in their attitude towards ritual. Rather, it was that both held the same attitude centred around the conflation between ritual and the immutability of dogma. The difference between the two groups lay only in which set of rituals they subjected to that conflation. The confusion of ritual and dogma on the Orthodox side is clear from a letter sent from Macarios to Nikon in 1656: ‘who from the Christians does not make the sign of the cross by the tradition of the Eastern Church, which from the beginning to this day has kept the faith, is a heretic...and by virtue of this is excommunicated from the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit and is anathematised: confession of the truth is disclosed by their hands.’¹⁷

From this point on, the Orthodox Church strenuously asserted the link between ritual and dogma. On 28 February 1722, the new Holy Synod declared that ‘whosoever forms the sign of the cross with two fingers and not three is ascribed to the schism, regardless of

¹⁵ For a full description, see Meyendorff, *Russia, Ritual and Reform*, 127-218.

¹⁶ See *Skrizhal'. Akty soborov 1654, 1655, 1656 godov.* (St. Petersburg, 2013) and *Deianiia Moskovskikh soborov 1666-1667 gg.* (Moscow, 1905).

¹⁷ Quoted in “Ob otmene kliatv na starye obriady. Doklad mitropolita Leningradskogo i Novgorodskogo Nikodima (Rotova) na pomestnom sobore 31 maia 1971 goda,” *Zhurnal Moskovskoi patriarkhii* no. 6 (1971): 64.

obedience to the Church and taking all church sacraments and whether they do so out of harmful sophistry or out of ignorance or stubbornness.’¹⁸ It was irrelevant if a person using the two fingered sign of the cross considered himself loyal to the Church and completed all of his religious duties: the ritual he used still made him an enemy of the Church and outside of its fold. Thus the conflation between ritual and dogma was made absolute, overriding even matters of internal conviction. If someone made the sign of the cross with two fingers, then they had violated the immutable dogmas and had left the aegis of the Church. Ritual, through its conflation with dogma, had become a defining tenet of Orthodoxy. As such, it was to be imposed on the Russian population. If persuasion failed, then force would have to suffice. The late seventeenth century episcopate had few qualms about utilising troops and burning recalcitrant parishioners at the stake to push the new liturgical compact onto their flocks.¹⁹

Confession

It should be obvious why ritual was of importance for the delineation of an Orthodox confessional identity against the schism. One form of rite indicated orthodoxy and the other heterodoxy. However, confessionalisation requires more than just ritual reform. It needs a credo, the extension of the administrative apparatus of the Church, a focus on clerical education and the spread of treatises attacking other creeds whilst defining one’s own. These processes are generated in response to the challenge of other confessions. No less important is the involvement of the state. It should be an active participant in utilising religion as a means for social disciplining and be in pursuit of denominational homogeneity. Were the ritual reforms of the Great Moscow Council part of a broader confessionalisation scheme in Russia?

In terms of a credo, Orthodoxy did possess one in the form of Petr Mohyla’s 1640 *Orthodox Confession of Faith*, a document whereby he ‘developed a distinctive confession of faith and theological system for the Orthodox church that echoed the eloquence and sophistication of the leading confessional treatises of the Protestant and Roman Catholic churches.’ Mohyla also published a short catechism in the same year that was intended to spread his credo to the general population.²⁰ His actions were very much provoked by the

¹⁸ *Sobranie postanovlenii po chasti raskola*, vol. II (London, 1863), 102.

¹⁹ G. Michels, “Ruling Without Mercy: Seventeenth-Century Russian Bishops and Their Officials,” *Kritika* 4, no. 3 (2003): 531–533.

²⁰ Skinner, *The Eastern Church*, 30.

threat of the Uniate church. Its existence required a firmer definition of what Orthodoxy was.

Georg Michels has also shown the way in which the ritual changes of 1666-7 were closely connected with the gradual tightening of administrative links and reform of the education of the parish clergy. As the priests were seen as potential opponents of the Nikonian rituals, the 1666 Council prescribed visitations to ensure clerics were not only enacting the liturgical changes but were also behaving in a manner that befitted their priestly rank.²¹ Didactic pamphlets began to be printed in Moscow that 'combined admonitions about proper Christian behaviour with instructions about the correct use of the new liturgies.'²² The schism provoked the Church into reforms that sought to extend their control over the belief, behaviour and actions not just of the clergy but also the laity.

However, the Church initially lacked the administrative reach to thoroughly discipline their confession: Michels notes that it was only by the beginning of the eighteenth century that the new rituals had replaced the old in most Orthodox churches.²³ The bureaucratic clout required only came with the reforms between 1740 and 1800 that provided new systems of control in the dioceses (such as consistories and clerical superintendents) and a seminary system designed to improve the quality of the clergy. Freeze has termed this as nothing other than 'an organisational revolution.'²⁴

The Church published a variety of polemics against Old Belief and its rituals. The most famous were St. Dimitrii of Rostov's *Investigation of the Schismatic Faith* and bishop Pitirim of Nizhnii Novogord's *Prashchitsa*, both from the early eighteenth century.²⁵ They reinforced the conflation of dogma and ritual by furthering the association of the old rite with heresy and called for violent repression of Old Belief by the state.²⁶ At the same time they set out the basic tenets of Russian Orthodoxy, further spreading the credo created by Mohyla. What is most important is that quotations from these works found their way into the Psalter and the Hours, books of fundamental importance both for the liturgy and

²¹ G. B. Michels, *At War with the Church: Religious Dissent in Seventeenth-Century Russia* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 164–171.

²² *Ibid.*, 166.

²³ *Ibid.*, 187.

²⁴ G. L. Freeze, *The Russian Levites: Parish Clergy in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), 77.

²⁵ Dimitrii (Tuptalo), *Rozysk o raskol'niceskoi brynskoii vere* (Moscow, 1847); Pitirim, *Prashchitsa* (Moscow, 1752).

²⁶ Simon (Shleev), *Edinoverie v svoem vnutrennem razvitii* (Moscow, 2004), 17–18.

religious teaching. Thus, the spread of the credo among the populace was accompanied by an emphasis on the ritual distinction between Orthodoxy and the schism.

Although his predecessors had also been involved in utilising the Church to extend their control over the population, Peter the Great upped the tempo. He ‘saw religion as a means of disciplining rational and industrious subjects,’ an attitude which explains the way in which he heaped administrative duties onto the clergy and also bureaucratised the highest level of the Church by abolishing the patriarchate and replacing it with the collegiate Synod.²⁷ Peter also detested how superstition prevented the emergence of rationality in Russia. Thus in the eighteenth century, ‘the Church launched a full-scale campaign to reshape popular Orthodoxy.’²⁸ Peter himself was relatively tolerant of Old Belief and granted it a degree of legality. His main interest was that the Old Believers pay the double poll tax and be useful to his state. Empress Anna strictly enforced these provisions and extended conscription to the Old Believers.²⁹ Both rulers still wanted to drive the schismatics out of existence but they conceded that force only drove zealous Old Believers into exile: therefore use should be made of those who absolutely would not convert.

Thus, the Russian case meets most of the requirements for the classic case of confessionalisation: the enforcement of ritual distinction, the formulation of a credo, a new focus on clerical education and the creation of administrative mechanisms to enforce control of priests and laity. The state also sought to use religion as a means for social disciplining and often relied on force to attack Old Belief and other religious groups in the name of uniting all under the Church. However, we must remember that confessionalisation takes a long time to achieve. This was especially so in Russia where the administrative institutions of both the Church and state were massively underdeveloped. Therefore Orthodoxy was *confessionalising* rather than *confessionalised* in the course of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It was a process rather than a completed state. What had occurred in this period was the ‘confessionalisation of mind

²⁷ Dixon, “The Russian Orthodox Church,” 326.

²⁸ G. L. Freeze, “Russian Orthodoxy: Church, People, and Politics in Imperial Russia,” in D. Lieven, ed., *Cambridge History of Russia*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 297; For the links between superstition and confessionalisation in the early eighteenth century, see A. S. Lavrov, *Koldovstvo i religii v Rossii, 1700-1740 gg.* (Moscow, 2000) and E. B. Smilianskaia, *Volshebnyi. Bogokhul’niki. Eretiki. Narodnaia religioznost’ i “dukhovnye prestupleniia” v Rossii XVIII v.* (Moscow, 2003). For Russian superstition generally, see S. Dixon, “Superstition in Imperial Russia,” *Past and Present* 199 (suppl. 3) (2008): 207–22.

²⁹ R. O. Crummey, *Old Believers and the World of Antichrist: Vyg Community and the Russian State, 1694-1855* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1970), 159–161.

and mentality' in the higher ranks of the Church.³⁰ There was the will but not yet the means.

While confessionalisation was occurring in the eighteenth century, its motivation has to be considered. Freeze has suggested that the Church's efforts to confessionalise before 1818 were motivated not by fear of Old Belief but by an Enlightenment preoccupation with eradicating superstition and educating the population.³¹ This is partially true but it also neglects some key points. Firstly, it is necessary to see the confessionalisation of Orthodoxy as beginning not in 1750 but rather in the 1660s. As Michels puts it, 'Peter I merely continued, and possibly intensified, a trend that had already emerged in the second half of the seventeenth century.'³² Certainly the motivations behind confessionalisation changed under the influence of both Peter I and Catherine II but there can be no doubting that the first four or five decades of the process were pushed by fear of the schism and the need to enforce liturgical reform. Secondly, it neglects the ritual dimension. Confessions are not just formed by institutions and the expansion of control but also by formalising and spreading a distinctive ritual. In the case of Orthodoxy, the Nikonian rites defined the confession precisely in juxtaposition to the schism. Finally, anxieties about the spread of Old Belief most definitely shaped the Church's attitude to *Edinoverie*. Fear of the spread of the schism amongst the Orthodox flock led to a reluctance to establish it.

The Emergence of the Ritual Re-Evaluation

The short reign of Peter III marked the beginning of a new relationship between the state and Old Belief. In a decree of 29 January 1762, he declared a review of the existing legislation on the schism and vowed to end coercion against it.³³ After deposing her unfortunate spouse, Catherine the Great continued with his policies. Whilst 'Old Belief was not recognised as a distinct religious group, due to the relaxation of religious constraints, Old Believer communities enjoyed certain freedoms and privileges' which included the foundation of large centres of organisation in both Moscow and St. Petersburg, the most famous being the Rogozhskoe and Preobrazhenskoe cemeteries.³⁴

³⁰ A. Bruning, "Confessionalization in the *Slavia Orthodoxa* (Belorussia, Ukraine, Russia)? – Potential and Limits of a Western Historiographical Concept," in T. Bremer, ed., *Religion and the Conceptual Boundary in Central and Eastern Europe. Encounters of Faiths*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 88.

³¹ G. L. Freeze, "Rechristianization of Russia: The Church and Popular Religion, 1750-1850," *Studia Slavica Finlandensia* 6 (1990): 107.

³² Michels, *At War with the Church*, 227.

³³ I. Paert, *Old Believers, Religious Dissent and Gender in Russia, 1760-1850* (Manchester, 2003), 59.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 61.

Catherine's religious policies were not a recognition of freedom of conscience but rather the beginning of a system of multi-confessional establishment whereby various faiths and religious groups were placed on a hierarchy of privileges and limitations that was designed to act as a mechanism for social control and to guarantee stability on peripheries populated by Catholics, Protestants and Muslims.³⁵ Granting Old Believers certain freedoms brought them out from hiding and into the public gaze, meaning they could be subject to a greater degree of surveillance and mobilisation. This was particularly the case with edicts designed to lure Old Believers back from their exile abroad and a 1785 regulation that allowed schismatics to be elected to civil positions.³⁶

This was a sharp shock for the Church, which now had to abandon the century-old tactic of persecution. Some hierarchs, cognisant of the need for a change, led 'a revolution in views on the old rituals and relations to them.'³⁷ Signs of this shift in mentality were already present in 1762 when Metropolitan Dimitrii (Sechenov) and Bishop Gedeon (Krinovskii) declared that the Old Believers could keep their rituals 'if, in everything else and especially in the dogmas of faith, they promise to abide in the Holy Greco-Russian Church, do not keep or introduce any of the heresies anathematised by the ecumenical and local councils and never insult those who use rituals different from their own.'³⁸ Here already was a division between dogma and ritual, the idea that a person could use the two fingered sign of the cross and not violate the fundamental truths of the Church. This found support among secular officials, such as the ober-procurator I. I. Melissino. In a manuscript from 1763, he argued that a review should be conducted of the differences between the old and the new rituals so that 'those rituals and old books which do not contradict official Orthodoxy could be allowed.'³⁹ In 1764 Catherine abolished the 1722

³⁵ For a particularly clear-cut examination of the confessional hierarchy, see R. D. Crews, *For Prophet and Tsar: Islam and Empire in Russia and Central Asia* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006), Introduction.

³⁶ For the right to return, see *Polnoe sobranie zakonov rossiskoi imperii* (PSZ), vol. XVI, no. 11725. For civil positions, see PSZ, vol. XXII, no. 16238.

³⁷ (Shleev), *Edinoverie*, 20.

³⁸ Quoted in R. V. Kaurkin and O. A. Pavlova, *Edinoverie v Rossii: ot zarozhdeniia idei do nachala XX veka* (St. Petersburg, 2011), 46–47.

³⁹ I. Melissino, "Mysli o raskol'nikakh i o sredstvakh k obrashcheniiu ikh, predstavleniia imperatritse Ekaterine Ivanom Melissino," in *Novye materialy dlia istorii staroobriadchestva XVII-XVIII vv.* (Moscow, 1890), 171–172; for a modern analysis, see I. A. Ivanov, "Deiatel'nost' I. I. Melissino na postu ober-prokurora sviateishego sinoda (po arkhivnym materialam)," in T. A. Bernshtam and A. I. Teriukov, eds., *Khristianstvo v Regionakh Mira*, Vyp. 2 (St. Petersburg, 2008), 103–119.

Synodal edict that had established an unequivocal relationship between ritual and dogma.⁴⁰

These early signs of a new attitude towards ritual in the Orthodox Church bore fruit with the publication of Platon (Levshin's) *Exhortation to the Schismatics* in 1766 and its distribution to every parish in the Empire in 1769.⁴¹ Platon's argument was that the Orthodox and the Old Believers essentially believed in the same things: 'you [Old Believers] worshipfully believe in the one God of the Holy Trinity, as do we: you confess to Our Lord Jesus Christ, the saviour of the world, as do we: you piously honour the holy Gospels, the holy ecumenical and local councils for the rules of faith, as do we.'⁴² He then conducted an exhaustive exercise in comparing the liturgical differences that existed between Orthodoxy and Old Belief in order to demonstrate why these distinct rituals did not alter the fact that the two groups believed and confessed a single holy truth. Therefore, Platon came to the same conclusion as Melissino. As there was no dogmatic difference between Orthodoxy and Old Belief but only a ritual one, there should be no barrier to the latter using the pre-Nikonian rituals in the Church itself.⁴³ None of this meant that Platon thought the schism should continue to exist but rather that 'his approach to those who have left the church is to extend to them the love that, based on Christ's words, unites all Orthodox Christians.'⁴⁴

An important consequence of the abolition of the conflation between ritual and dogma meant that the Church was now able to reflect more on internal, individual belief without necessarily considering external behaviour. The most important thing now was that the Old Believer converts could confirm that they believed in the legitimacy of the Church and its teachings rather than externally conform in ritual behaviour. This re-evaluation of ritual meant a swing in focus towards internal religious conviction, a movement away from policing external action to being concerned with beliefs. This marks the continuation of a process noted by Paul Bushkovitch in the seventeenth century whereby a shift towards sermonising represented a 'move toward individual religious life, for in a very direct way they tell the individual to be personally a good Christian, not merely a

⁴⁰ PSZ, vol. XVI, no. 12067.

⁴¹ Kaurkin and Pavlova, *Edinoverie v Rossii*, 49.

⁴² Platon (Levshin), *Raznye sochineniia*, vol. 6 (Moscow, 1780), 32.

⁴³ Ibid., 6:33–34.

⁴⁴ E. K. Wirtschafter, *Religion and Enlightenment in Catherinian Russia. The Teachings of Metropolitan Platon* (DeKalb: Niu Press, 2013), 53.

participant in liturgy and ritual or an outside admirer of the monks.⁴⁵ That Platon, an adept preacher, should be a leader in this individualisation of religious faith is therefore not surprising, especially since he and others 'sought to encourage more cognitive forms of religious belief and practice.'⁴⁶

By the end of the 1760s, at least some influential members of the Church had come to the conclusion that ritual was not the same thing as dogma. The two were distinct and therefore difference in ritual did not preclude church unity. The change owed most to the shift in state policy inaugurated by Peter III and continued by Catherine. The close relationship between Church and state meant that the Russian Orthodox prelates had little choice but to go along with the new enlightened attitude towards the schism. Platon himself was the court preacher and tutor to Tsarevich Paul. He was therefore one of the Empress' most important ideologists. The *Exhortation* was designed to make Catherine's policy of tolerance more palatable to the Russian Orthodox Church and to translate the meaning of her beneficent measures into theological and liturgical terms.⁴⁷ Thus, the ritual re-evaluation owed its existence to the practical need to acknowledge that the schism could not be destroyed. This mirrors the situation in Europe after the Thirty Years War where irenicism and growing discourses of religious toleration advanced changing attitudes to ritual.⁴⁸

We must be cautious not to exaggerate the extent of ritual re-evaluation. It absolutely did not mean indifference to ritual. Nor was it a *carte blanche* for absolute freedom of choice in ritual matters. Platon and other hierarchs stopped short of holding the old rituals to be equally legitimate to the Nikonian ones. The ritual re-evaluation meant at this point in time only that these two sets of rituals could be permitted. It was not an argument for ritual freedom or even ritual equality.

Edinoverie

Creating Unity in Faith

By the end of the 1760s, two of the necessary preconditions for the emergence of *Edinoverie* had fallen into place: a tolerant government policy towards Old Belief and the

⁴⁵ P. Bushkovitch, *Religion and Society in Russia: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (OUP USA, 1992), 9.

⁴⁶ Wirschafter, *Religion and Enlightenment*, 61.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 133.

⁴⁸ H. Schilling, *Religion, Political Culture and the Emergence of Early Modern Society. Essays in German and Dutch History*. (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 231.

Church's translation of that policy into the theological terms of the ritual re-evaluation. However, there was one more prerequisite required, the willingness of the Old Believers themselves to accept some kind of union with the Church. It was the lack of a legitimate priesthood that motivated them to reconsider their break with Russian Orthodoxy.

During the last decades of the seventeenth century, the Old Believers had to deal with the problem of priests. The generation of clergy who had joined the schism when it began was dying off. As no bishops had defected from the official Church, there was no opportunity to canonically ordain replacements. The Old Believers faced being cut off from the apostolic succession and the sacraments. Divergent views on how to handle this crisis led to a split in the fledging movement into the priestly and priestless concords. The former relied on Orthodox clergy who, after their ordination, fled the Church. This was the source of their name, the *beglopopovtsy*, 'those who have fugitive priests.' The latter declared that since Nikon's reforms amounted to nothing less than the fall of the Third Rome and the triumph of the Anti-Christ, the priesthood was effectively defunct and would not be re-established until the second coming of Christ: they were the priestless, the *bespopovtsy*.⁴⁹ In the mean time, some of their lay leaders performed certain sacraments (penance and baptism), a practice they legitimated by referring to those canonical rules that authorised a layman to administer rites in cases of emergency. Neither solution was perfect. The fugitive priests had often fled not because of any principled opposition to the Church but rather because their behaviour had been poor enough to warrant the threat of disciplinary measures. The priestless had to deal with those sections of the sacred writings that emphasised the role of bishops and priests in gaining access to salvation.

As a result, Old Believers from both broad groups began searching for an acceptable priesthood, dispatching embassies to Georgia, the Balkans and the Patriarchates of the East in the hope that bishops there could be persuaded to ordain a new hierarchy. On occasion they came close to succeeding but were thwarted by the fact that most such Churches were financially and diplomatically dependent on the Russian Tsar.⁵⁰ One such ambassador for the schism was the *beglopopovets* abbot Nikodim of Starodub'. He

⁴⁹ Crummey, *Old Believers*, 23.

⁵⁰ The Metropolitans of Jerusalem and Jassy in 1712 and 1731 respectively agreed to the request but later reneged. Nevertheless, the hope did not die and the Old Believers continued to send requests to other Orthodox Churches throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, continuing even after the establishment of the Belaia Krinitsa hierarchy. For the last such attempt in 1892, see L. A. Gerd, *Konstantinopol' i Peterburg: tserkovnaia politika Rossii na pravoslavnom Vostoke* (Moscow, 2006), 417–437.

underwent trips to Georgia in 1768 and then to the East in 1779 and 1781 in the hope of finding a pliant prelate to realise his plans.⁵¹ However, he enjoyed no success.

His final failure spurred him to investigate the possibility of some kind of reconciliation with the Orthodox Church. In July 1781, Nikodim entered into negotiations with Baron P. A. Rumiantsev, Metropolitan Gavriil (Petrov) of St. Petersburg and Prince Grigorii Potemkin, the most influential potentate of the Russian Empire. He told them that he and over a thousand co-religionists wanted 'to have among us the divinely establish episcopal rank' and therefore were willing to come under the aegis of the Russian Orthodox Church.⁵² Equally, he wrote that he also wanted to see the destruction of 'the anathemas and condemnations placed on the ancient Russian church customs' so that 'many thousands of souls, upon feeling such mercy, will be prepared to place themselves under the entirely perfect (*vseshennoe*) administration of a bishop.'⁵³

Despite threats to his person, Nikodim persisted and was able to present a petition in September 1783.⁵⁴ On 11 March 1784, after a year of further negotiation, Catherine dispatched an order to Gavriil (Petrov), informing him that he was to tell the bishops of Mogilev and Slaviansk to prepare to dispatch priests to the Old Believers who would perform the liturgy and the sacraments by the old ritual.⁵⁵ Nikodim arrived home on 2 April but died just over a month later, apparently worn out by his exertions. After his demise, the project stalled. Potemkin made resettlement to Novorossia a condition for receiving priests: 'those who desire to settle in the lands of the Tauride region, on the left bank of the Dnieper river [...] will receive priests from the bishop of Tauride who are subordinate to him and who will always use the ritual and church order of their customs.'⁵⁶ However, the Old Believers remained in Starodub'. Only at the end of 1787 did the situation change when Metropolitan Gavriil received a petition that prophesised dire consequences if priests were not dispatched: the Petersburg prelate hastily sent a cleric to Starodub, thus fully establishing the union initiated by Nikodim.

⁵¹ Pera, "Edinoverie," 298–300.

⁵² T. Verkhovskii, *Iskanie staroobriadtsami v XVIII veke zakonnoego arkhieieistva* (St Petersburg, 1868), 6.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁵⁴ 'Many of the townsmen did not yield to the exhortations of Nikodim and some from the simple people were so enraged that they wanted to murder the monk with his supporters.' (Shleev), *Edinoverie*, 29.

⁵⁵ PSZ, vol. XXII, no. 16239.

⁵⁶ Verkhovskii, *Iskanie*, 39.

Potemkin's interest in *Edinoverie* shows that the Russian government's attitude toward Old Belief was motivated not so much by some abstract principle of religious toleration but rather by the practical benefits they expected to accrue from drawing the schismatics either back from exile or out of hiding. Toleration was expected not only to support the stability of the Russian state and improve surveillance of the population but also to strengthen and develop the new southern border zone. Reconciliation of Old Belief with the Church was to aid in the mobilisation of the populace.

Another union was being realised near Elizavetgrad in 1780. Archbishop Nikephoros (Theotokis), a well-educated Greek prelate, had received a request from the Old Believers of Znamenka for priests to perform according to the old ritual.⁵⁷ Nikephoros, a great fan of Platon's *Exhortation*, agreed and promptly sent a clergyman to perform the sacraments. He himself went to bless their new church.⁵⁸ This was much to the chagrin of Metropolitans Gavriil and Platon since Nikephoros had not bothered to inform them until after the fact. Their annoyance was evident in the fact that it took Gavriil over a year to respond, doing so only on 18 December 1781. The Synod, Gavriil told Nikephoros, 'want to rescind your instruction; but so as not to cause new trouble we are silent, hoping that you will attempt to bring them [the schismatics] to a more healthy understanding so that they fully settle down and will agree with the Orthodox Church in everything.'⁵⁹ Platon doubted the sincerity of the converts and moreover stated 'that to allow them to use the old books and rituals, I fear nothing else from this than great temptation for others.' Platon's concern was that allowing insincere converts into the Church would only lead to a greater apostasy at a later date. If the schismatics truly wanted to join the Church, then 'let them join so that there are no differences between us and them.'⁶⁰ Confessional anxieties, in the form of fear of temptation and defection, were shaping the response to *Edinoverie*.

Bruess is right to suggest that part of the problem was related to authority: 'Theotokis undertook to accommodate the Old Believers without first seeking the permission of the Synod, while the Synod itself was directly responsible for the Starodub affair without the

⁵⁷ Nikephoros was working on a basis already established by Eugenios (Voulgaris). For a biography of the latter, see S. K. Batalden, *Catherine II's Greek Prelate: Eugenios Voulgaris in Russia, 1771-1806* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).

⁵⁸ Bruess, *Religion, Identity and Empire*, 147.

⁵⁹ "Kem i kak polozheno nachalo edinoveriiu v Russkoi tserkvi," *Bratskoe slovo*, no. 2 (1892): 124.

⁶⁰ N. V. Lysogorskii, *Moskovskii mitropolit Platon Levshin kak protivoraskol'nichii deiatel'* (Rostov' on Don, 1905), 466.

agency of an archbishop or bishop.’⁶¹ However, the fact that both Platon and Gavriil were reluctant to realise the ritual re-evaluation in practice requires some explanation, especially since Platon consistently refused to take advantage of such opportunities. He was cold towards Nikodim’s scheme and would only accept it after the abbot made concessions to demonstrate that his conversion was genuine.⁶² Nor did he react any more favourably a request for unity in faith from the Don Cossacks in 1791. Here he was even more forthright. In a letter to the bishop of Voronezh, he said:

What they ask for cannot be permitted to them without heavy sorrow and temptation for others. My thought is that you do not present this to the Synod. Let they themselves petition if they want to: our business is to reject this mad and lawless request – I have repeatedly done this. I have never allowed our priests to perform any church service among the schismatics by their so-called old rituals and books. Because this is impossible to do without prejudice to our holy ritual, books, and the authority of the Church.⁶³

When the Cossack administration reviewed the situation and concluded that the request should not be met, Platon was thoroughly happy with the result. He would be able to show it to the Moscow Old Believers and get them ‘to shut up’ about the possibility of obtaining priests from the Church.

Platon rejected the idea that the pre-Nikonian rituals could be allowed within the Church, fearing that doing so would firstly ‘tempt’ members of the Orthodox flock and secondly would damage the reputation of the Nikonian rites. These statements were the answers of a confessionaliser, someone who defined the Orthodox flock by its ritual behaviour and sought to police that line vigilantly. His actions were motivated by a fear for the integrity of the confession: accepting insincere converts might threaten the spread of the schism and thus apostasy. It is notable that at this time Platon was launching a spate of confession-building policies that sought to strengthen the Orthodox Church’s administrative reach. In his diocese of Moscow, he had created the position of clerical superintendents to strengthen the control of the hierarchy over the clergy and their parishes and promulgated the first consistory regulation. Perhaps most importantly, his reforms of seminary education began to transform the clergy from the dispensers of sacraments into educators

⁶¹ Bruess, *Religion, Identity and Empire*, 154.

⁶² Pera, “Edinoverie,” 307.

⁶³ Lysogorskii, *Moskovskii mitropolit Platon Levshin*.

and preachers who sought to regulate the moral health of their flocks.⁶⁴ This was the beginning of the ‘professionalisation’ of the pastorate, their transformation into agents of surveillance and discipline for both state and Church.⁶⁵ Platon would hardly have been keen to undermine Orthodoxy and its ritual by taking on insincere converts whilst he was struggling to strengthen the confession through institutional reform.

Whilst Platon as a court ideologist might be intellectually committed to ritual tolerance, as a confessionaliser he could not be so in practice. Ritual was simply too important as a denominational dividing line to be so lightly abandoned and insincere converts could lead to apostasy from the Church. However, he did not have a free hand in the matter. Already the state had shown willingness to take the initiative from the Church when it discerned some utility in *Edinoverie*. Potemkin’s role in both projects was significant. Nikodim said of him that ‘without him our matter could not have happened and nothing would be done for us.’⁶⁶ The instance in Znamenka in 1780 shows much the same point: Archbishop Nikeforos, when he read Gavriil and Platon’s intemperate response to his initiative, subtly informed both prelates that he was in contact with Prince Potemkin, thus threatening them with the anger of Russia’s most senior statesman.⁶⁷ The Church was confronted with the prospect of losing control over who could and could not be admitted into the flock of Christ.

However, Catherine’s interest was too sporadic to be much of a threat to the Church and the experience with the Chernigov converts soured any further interest Potemkin had in the matter. It was only with the accession of Emperor Paul in 1796 that the problem became far more serious for the Church. Paul was personally interested in the idea of resolving the schism via *Edinoverie* and so the spectre loomed once again that the Church would loose control over the situation.⁶⁸ The Synod tried to pre-empt the Emperor’s intervention with an edict from 4 March 1798 that would allow individual bishops to

⁶⁴ For a description of these major reforms, see K. A. Papmehl, *Metropolitan Platon of Moscow (Petr Levshin, 1737-1812): Enlightened Prelate, Scholar, and Educator* (Newtonville, MA: Oriental Research Partners, 1983), 55–66.

⁶⁵ Freeze, “Russian Orthodoxy,” 292.

⁶⁶ Verkhovskii, *Iskanie*, 27.

⁶⁷ “Kem i kak polozheno,” 125–126.

⁶⁸ For Paul’s interest in Old Belief, see G. P. Stankevich, “‘...Obrashchenie serdets chelovecheskikh delo Bozhe est’ (Ukaz sviateishego sinoda ot 22 marta 1800 g: popytka izmeneniia gosudarstvennoi politiki po otnosheniiu k staroobriadtsam),” *Staroobriadchestvo: Istoriia, Kultura, Sovremennost’* 11 (2006): 33–36.

negotiate with Old Believers in their diocese and form *Edinoverie* communities that bore the explicit imprint of the Church's interests.⁶⁹

It was to no avail. On 3 June 1799, Paul instructed Amvrosii (Podobedov) of Kazan' to take personal charge over a group of Muscovite Old Believers whom Platon had repeatedly refused to admit into communion with the Church. The reason for the rejections was that their petition made reference to the creation of an Old Believer ecclesiastical consistory (*dukhovnoe pravlenie*).⁷⁰ Had Paul acceded to this particular request (which he did not), Old Belief would have achieved a place on the Empire's confessional hierarchy akin to that possessed by the Muslims and Protestants, firmly legalising them in the eyes of the state.⁷¹

The matter ended in farce. Amvrosii and the Old Believers could not come to agreement over how to conduct prayers for the imperial family and so Paul was forced to rescind his instructions only two months later, leaving the bishop to rapidly recover any compromising correspondence that might reveal the embarrassing slip up.⁷² Platon knew that the Church had to take matters into its own hands. He therefore decided to create a *Edinoverie* community in Moscow on the basis of a more moderate petition he had received from a rival group of schismatics in September 1799. He submitted to the Synod a set of conditions for accepting the Muscovite Old Believers into the Church. Even now he proved hesitant. Between the first Synodal hearing of the conditions on 28 February 1800 and the second session on 24 August, the Metropolitan twice expressed concerns to Amvrosii, arguing it would be best to reject the conditions outright until the Synod had more 'freedom' to discuss the matter.⁷³ Despite this, the Synod was prepared to act and passed Platon's rules as an edict on 24 August 1800. At this point, the settlement was created under the 1798 edict and so was only meant to apply to Moscow.

Once again, the spectre of secular interference prompted a change in course. In September, the 'extreme' group of Old Believers whom Paul had admitted into *Edinoverie* in 1799 petitioned him to complain about Amvrosii and to ask that the original instruction be fulfilled. Amvrosii made a remarkable suggestion in the defence of his actions. He requested that the diocesan settlement between Platon and the 'moderate'

⁶⁹ PSZ, vol. XXV, no. 18428.

⁷⁰ Lysogorskii, *Moskovskii mitropolit Platon Levshin*, 326.

⁷¹ Ibid., 325.

⁷² Ibid., 336.

⁷³ Ibid., 390–391.

Old Believers be turned into an general model for *Edinoverie*.⁷⁴ Paul agreed and on 27 October 1800 promulgated two edicts, one creating a *Edinoverie* community in Moscow and the other proclaiming the points of Platon as an empire wide template. It is evident that this was a hasty move on the Church's part. There had been no mention of the idea of transforming the Moscow agreement into a general settlement before September 1800. However, given the possibility of further intervention that might once again allow suspect converts into the Church, the hierarchs acted to push through a moderate scheme that bore the impress of the interests of the confession and the Church.

The Rules of Platon

How did Platon balance confessional concerns with the requirement to realise ritual tolerance in the 1800 settlement? There were sixteen rules with two additional opinions attached. Each rule was based on the request of the Moscow Old Believers and Platon's subsequent commentary. The commentary itself was often laconic, sometimes limiting itself to the single word 'agreed.' Therefore it is no overstatement to say the rules of Platon belonged as much to the Rogozhskoe Old Believers as to the Metropolitan. They represented a comprehensive package aimed at defining the contours of *Edinoverie*. In doing so they necessarily helped to outline the shapes of the Orthodox flock and of Old Belief. To analyse them, I will subdivide them into categories relating to ritual, confession and administration.⁷⁵

The consequences of the ritual re-evaluation were brushed up against in the very first rule. Here the Old Believers requested that the anathemas placed on the old rites in 1656 and 1666-7 be removed. This pointed to an abiding problem for the Church. What was to be done with the anathemas on ritual when the connection between ritual and dogma had been dissolved? Platon announced that he would 'remove the anathemas previously placed on them [the Old Believers]': the Church believed the anathemas had been placed correctly but now that the Old Believers had come to recognise the Church and its truths there was no point in keeping them.⁷⁶ Thus, Platon seemed to concede that which the new converts had asked for. However, his second sentence threw the matter into confusion. He stated that each individual convert to the Church would go before a bishop or a priest and have a short prayer said over them that would remove the anathema. Here was a fundamental misunderstanding. The Old Believers wanted the Church as a body to

⁷⁴ Ibid., 391–404.

⁷⁵ See appendix (a) for a full translation.

⁷⁶ Kaurkin and Pavlova, *Edinoverie v Rossii*, 187.

remove the anathemas placed on the rituals whilst Platon wanted only to remove the anathemas from each convert individually. The anathemas in general would remain in force.

Moreover, Platon indicated, although did not directly state, that he held the anathemas lay on people and not rituals. This fine distinction relates to how the Orthodox Church had begun to rewrite the history of the anathemas in the light of the ritual re-evaluation. They began to extend their new attitude towards ritual back into the past and claimed that the mid seventeenth century councils had never conflated dogma with ritual. The councils thus had not anathematised the rituals themselves. Instead, they had anathematised those people who used the old rites to signify rebellion against the authority of the Church. In other words, churchmen like Platon had begun to reinterpret the anathemas as mechanisms for policing internal belief *alone* rather than mechanisms for enforcing external ritual behaviour *and* internal belief, belief and behaviour being conflated into a single category. Therefore Platon's commentary was not a concession but rather an act of moving the goalposts. There was no need to relieve the old rituals of an anathema that had never been placed upon them. This, combined with the emphasis on individual absolution, was designed to avoid having to destroy the anathemas entirely since they were still valued as a way of defining the flock against the schism. Destruction of the anathemas would concede the Church had been the guilty party in creating the schism and so had waged a century and a half of persecution wrongly: hence Platon's insistence that the 'Church was justified in placing them.'

The problem of ritual was dragged up again in rule three. Here the Old Believers asked that Platon and the Holy Synod allow the new *Edinoverie* clergy to perform church services and the sacraments by the books printed in the reigns of the first five Patriarchs (i.e. those before Patriarch Nikon). Platon granted this but his reasons for doing so might have caused the Old Believers to wince: 'although in the books that they use there is some sinfulness, [it is not] in the essential dogmas of faith but in words and rituals.'⁷⁷ This was a conclusive statement of both the ritual re-evaluation and its limits. Rituals and dogmas were two separate things and it was dogma that was by far the more important. However, Platon's use of the word 'sinfulness' is telling. Just because he allowed the usage of the old rituals did not mean he thought they were of equal value or even

⁷⁷ Ibid., 188.

harmless. Thus one strategy to ensure that the Nikonian rituals remained intact as markers of the Orthodox confession was to argue that the schismatic rites were somehow inferior.

There was a basic problem. As Ivan Aksakov stated in an 1881 essay: how could the Church allow its bishops, priests and flocks to use anything that had sinfulness in it?⁷⁸ Rule four guaranteed to the Old Believers that Orthodox bishops would bless their churches and antimensia by the old books while rule eight left open the possibility for prelates to bless new priests with the two fingered sign of the cross. Therefore bishops in particular were exposed to rituals that the rules themselves declared to be sinful.

Platon himself provided a partial solution to this problem in his second attached opinion where he expressed the ‘hope that God will enlighten them [the *edinoversty*] in time and be distinguished from the Church in nothing.’⁷⁹ In other words, the usage of the sinful rituals was considered to be only a temporary concession that would fade once the converts lost their schismatic tendencies. This in turn implied that *Edinoverie* was not fully Orthodox and thus gave rise to the notorious phrase that it was only a ‘step to Orthodoxy (*stupen’ k pravoslaviu*).’ This opinion both provided comfort to those queasy about using the old rites whilst also arguing that the incorrect attitude towards ritual on the part of the converts would gradually be eroded. However, it was severe misunderstanding of the value the *edinoversty* and the Old Believers placed on rituals. Equally, the very existence of the rules contradicted this aim since they created institutions that would protect the old rites rather than weaken them.

The second opinion, when combined with rules one and three, marked the extent to which Platon was willing to apply the ritual re-evaluation in practice. All in all, they painted a conception of *Edinoverie* as a mechanism whereby Old Believers were gradually assimilated into the Orthodox faith. However, this seemingly contradicted not only the logical consequences of the ritual re-evaluations but also the very purpose and lure of *Edinoverie*. Its power lay precisely in the fact that it maintained and legitimised the usage of the old rituals. In other words, the rules supported the continued existence of the pre-Nikonian rites whilst also hoping for their eventual destruction. The contradiction between confessionalisation and the ritual re-evaluation was at the root of this problem.

⁷⁸ I. S. Aksakov, “Po povodu opredeleniia sv. sinoda o dopolnenii nekotorykh punktov v pravilakh edinoveriia,” in *Sobranie sochinenii I. S. Aksakova*, vol. 7 (Moscow, 1886), 182.

⁷⁹ Kaurkin and Pavlova, *Edinoverie v Rossii*, 192.

In rule fifteen, the Old Believers suggested that prayers to the imperial family were to be conducted according to the Synodal form. This was a concession on their part since the more extreme Old Believers who had turned to Paul in 1799 had wanted to only use the formulation presented in the old books. Rule sixteen declared that neither the new converts nor the Orthodox were to insult each others' rituals or books since these matters did not relate to 'the essence of faith.'⁸⁰ Both pronouncements show that the parties were willing to offer concessions to the other in the name of unity. The *edinovertsy* conceded the use of a Synodal ritual in their churches whilst the Orthodox Church had to confront the fact that they could no longer insult or demean the old rituals. However, the rules themselves said the old rituals were sinful and the Church did nothing to disown the polemical tracts of the eighteenth century, many of which continued to be printed.

The administrative terms outlined in the 1800 settlement were yet another way in which the assimilative dimension of *Edinoverie* was fundamentally undermined. Rule two confirmed that the *Edinoverie* parishioners had the right to elect their own priests who would then be confirmed by the bishop. This was a notable concession since the practice of clerical election was dying off in the Orthodox Church itself.⁸¹ The sixth rule placed the *Edinoverie* clergy directly under the control of the diocesan bishop, thereby preventing the intervention of the consistory, while rule twelve confirmed that clergy suspected of committing crime also lay under the direct jurisdiction of the bishops himself. These commitments essentially established an administrative distinction between *Edinoverie* and Orthodoxy that was to turn the *Edinoverie* parishes into incubators for feelings of denominational difference.

The assimilative character of *Edinoverie* was also in conflict with the confessional rules that created borders between the *edinovertsy* and Orthodox believers. Rules five and eleven were the foundation stones on which these confessional dividing lines were built and they gave further cause to think that *Edinoverie* was something less than fully Orthodox. In rule five, the Old Believers had asked Platon that the new *Edinoverie* clergy should not be compelled to attend common services in Orthodox churches but that such services might be held in the *Edinoverie* temples. Equally, Old Believers should not be forced to go to services marked by 'the three fingered sign of the cross, shaved beards and other [rites] that contradict the old customs.' Finally, they asked that even Old Believers

⁸⁰ Ibid., 191.

⁸¹ G. L. Freeze, *Parish Clergy in 19th Century Russia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 29.

who were ascribed as Orthodox should be allowed to join the 'Old Believer church.'⁸² This related to an essential problem. Many of those considered Orthodox by the Church's metrical books had a preference for the old rites. They were thus administratively considered as Orthodox but were Old Believers by conscience and so might desire access to *Edinoverie*. In reply, Platon argued that the matter of attending common services should be left to the 'good judgement' of the priests and bishops involved. However, in regards to those who could be permitted to be part of *Edinoverie*, Platon forbade anyone who was noted as Orthodox from joining (*prisoedineniia*). The only exception that could be made was if the individual concerned had never taken the sacraments in an Orthodox church.⁸³

Rule eleven furthered the prohibition. Here the Muscovite petitioners asked that 'if any son of the Greco-Russian Church desires to have the sacraments administered by an Old Believer priest, then this is not forbidden. Equally, if an Old Believer desires to have the sacraments administered in a Greek Church, then this is also not forbidden.'⁸⁴ Platon denied the request, stating that the Orthodox believers could only turn to *Edinoverie* clergy for the sacraments in 'extreme need and in fatal cases' when an Orthodox priest could not be found. While Platon was evidently happy for the *edinovertsy* to join Orthodoxy and take sacraments from Orthodox clergy, he did not extend the same right to the Church's pre-existing flock. This was because free movement from the new to the old rituals was, in the scheme of the rules, a step backwards, a movement away from perfect rituals to sinful ones. Or, in confessional terms, it was a movement away from Orthodoxy. The argument that *Edinoverie* was some sort of quasi-schismatic phenomenon was thereby strengthened whilst any attempt to assert the unity of both groups was undermined. Platon here was evidently motivated by the same feeling of confessional anxiety that had led him to oppose the creation of *Edinoverie* communities throughout the 1780s and 90s, fearing that the new *edinovertsy* would use their new position within the Church to tempt and convert members of the Orthodox flock.

This turned *Edinoverie* into a quarantine zone on the limits of Orthodoxy's confessional boundary with the schism. A person stayed there until they were 'purified' of their commitment to the pre-Nikonian rites and only then could they safely be admitted to the Church proper. No Orthodox person could be allowed to enter the quarantine zone lest

⁸² Kaurkin and Pavlova, *Edinoverie v Rossii*, 189.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 190.

they become ‘infected’ by the schismatic old rites. These two rules exposed the basic fault line in Platon’s thinking. On the hand there was an intellectual commitment to the idea of unity in dogma underwritten by the ritual re-evaluation but on the other there was the confessionalising mentality that valued a single distinct ritual as a tool of denominational formation and feared the influence of another religious group. Confessional assimilation and confessional division were thus both implanted with the rules. It was hoped that the *edinovertsy* could be assimilated into Orthodoxy proper but walls had to be erected that kept the new converts at arm’s length.

Furthermore, rule five’s prohibition against anyone ascribed to Orthodoxy joining *Edinoverie* proved to be particularly difficult. This was because many Old Believers were to develop a strategy of using the sacraments of the Orthodox Church to legitimise both their marriages and children whilst remaining part of the schism and hostile to the Church in response to the illegalisation of marriage in the 1830s.⁸⁵ Ultimately this was a clash of understandings of religious identity. The Metropolitan’s embargo on the Orthodox converting to *Edinoverie* contained within it a bureaucratic understanding of Orthodox identity rooted in the jottings of the metrical books. What determined Orthodox faith was not one’s convictions but rather one’s administrative ascription to a particular group. This smashed against the understanding of religious conviction expressed by the Old Believers whereby one’s ritual choice, rooted in the demands of conscience, was the determinant of identity. A person might very well be ascribed to Orthodoxy but they neither felt so in their hearts nor wanted to signify so with their fingers. What was present in the rules was a confessional understanding of religion whereby ‘religion in its public aspect was primarily a matter for political and social elites to settle for the benefit of those under their jurisdiction.’ This opposed a ‘voluntarist’ concept where ‘public forms of religion are treated as the consequences of the conscientious choices of individual believers.’⁸⁶

Ironically, Platon himself had created the situation whereby this clash could occur by allowing the existence of *Edinoverie*. As J. Cox has argued, ‘a central issue in the transition to a new religious settlement was the significance of freedom to make conscientious choices.’⁸⁷ *Edinoverie* proffered to the Old Believers a conscientious choice in what form of ritual they wanted to use upon their conversion. Did they want to use the old rites and be part of *Edinoverie* or convert directly to the Orthodox Church and adhere

⁸⁵ Paert, *Old Believers*, 571.

⁸⁶ J. Cox, “Religion and Imperial Power in Nineteenth-Century Britain,” in R. Helmstadter, ed., *Freedom and Religion in the Nineteenth Century* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 339.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

to the Nikonian rituals? The idea of choice according to 'conscience' (*sovest'*) was frequently reiterated by some of the rules which made clear that at least priests and bishops had the option to determine which ritual they used.⁸⁸ However, the rules themselves made clear that, in terms of the average believer, the choice extended only to converts and clergy. Everyone else had to abide by a confessional understanding of Orthodox identity prescribed by metrical books primarily used as a method of social surveillance and discipline.

The problem lay deep within Platon's own thought. His focus on individual faith and internal convictions, a key part what had enabled ritual re-evaluation, posed the question of the freedom of an individual to follow their conscience. However, he remained a hierarch of the Church, committed to defending its interests and the strength of its flock even if some degree of coercion was required to do so. The creation of *Edinoverie* and its embodiment in the rules was an icon of a contradiction between conscience and confession.

It is no small wonder that virtually all historians have come to different conclusions about the rules. Lysogorskii directly quoted a statement by Metropolitan Filaret (Drozdov) that it was impossible for more to have been given to the new *edinovertsy*.⁸⁹ Kaurkin and Pavlova, two modern historians, have echoed this sentiment: '*Edinoverie* was the only possible compromise for the resolution of the sesquicentennial opposition between Old Belief, state and Orthodoxy.'⁹⁰ Most Orthodox churchmen remained consistently of the opinion that the rules of Platon were worth maintaining: Professor Nikolai Subbotin expressed this most clearly when he stated 'there is no doubt that in questions about *Edinoverie* the supremely established rules of metropolitan Platon comprise the chief and almost only legal basis for their correct resolution,' although he later reneged from this view.⁹¹

Others have been more circumspect and even hostile. Simeon Shleev conceded that Platon's suspicion of the Old Believers was 'basically understandable.'⁹² However, he castigated the rules because 'nowhere is the difference between *Edinoverie* and

⁸⁸ For instance in rule nine, bishops were granted the right to follow their consciences as to whether they used the two fingered sign of the cross when blessing *edinovertsy*. Kaurkin and Pavlova, *Edinoverie v Rossii*, 190.

⁸⁹ Lysogorskii, *Moskovskii mitropolit Platon*, 388.

⁹⁰ Kaurkin and Pavlova, *Edinoverie v Rossii*, 93.

⁹¹ N. Subbotin, *Neskol'ko slov o edinoverii v otvete na vozrazheniia iz Viatki* (Moscow, 1869), 21–22.

⁹² S. Shleev, *Edinoverie v svoem vnutrennem razvitii. (V raz'iasnenie ego malorasprostranennosti sredi staroobriadtsev)*. (St. Petersburg, 1910), 73.

Orthodoxy so emphasised as in these establishments.⁹³ For him they embodied the inferior position of *Edinoverie*, a permanent reminder that real unity in faith had not been achieved. Ioann Verkhovskii went still further: ‘by his rules and opinions, his Grace Platon placed the *edinovertsy* [*soedinentsev*] and the official Church into an ambiguous and scandalous position.’⁹⁴

Both perspectives have something to recommend them. Platon was an eighteenth-century Russian Orthodox churchman with a profound dedication to confession building. Whilst he showed an extraordinary ability to adapt Enlightenment ideals to Orthodox theology, it was the latter and never the former that predominated his thinking.⁹⁵ His attitude to the rites of the schism reflects this perfectly. He was willing to argue for a dissociation of ritual and dogma on an intellectual level but he remained entirely wary both of the value of the schismatics’ rituals and of their intentions, an attitude deriving from his confessionalising mentality. Given this, Platon’s establishment of *Edinoverie* was always going to be reluctant and would always seek to safeguard the perceived interests of the Church before surrendering to the abstract principle of unity based on the ritual re-evaluation. Pressured by the state, a lack of time and the intrigues of a relatively extreme group of Moscow Old Believers, Platon forged an agreement that put the Orthodox confession first and unity second.

Nevertheless, the basic soundness of Shleev’s and Verkhovskii’s arguments has to be conceded. The rules could not fulfil an assimilative purpose. They could not bring the *edinovertsy* and the Orthodox closer together. The former in particular would always be reminded of the inferiority of their position and of the Church’s ambiguous relation to their prized old rituals. The settlement itself completely undermined the hope that the *edinovertsy* would abandon their rituals because it created, through the establishment of confessional boundaries and peculiar administrative relationships, a way for the old ritual to be maintained rather than undercut.

Taken collectively, the rules of Metropolitan Platon were a quagmire of contradictions. They both sought to assimilate and separate the *edinovertsy* from the Orthodox confession; they reflected a commitment to ritual choice, and thus a limited concession to the importance of conscience in determining religious practice, but yet also firmly stood by a confessional understanding of religion and identity where the choice of the

⁹³ *Pervyi Vserossiiskii s’ezd pravoslavnykh staroobriadtsev (edinovertsev)* (St. Petersburg, 1912), 62.

⁹⁴ I. Verkhovskii, *Sochineniia Ioanna Verkhovskogo*, vol. 3 (Leipzig, 1886), 143.

⁹⁵ Wirschafer, *Religion and Enlightenment*

individual had to be limited to protect the interests of the Church; they embodied the ritual re-evaluation but also set firm limitations on its extent and application to a real situation. These three contradictions set off historical dynamics that were to determine *Edinoverie*'s existence and its relationship to the Church until at least 1918. Numerous attempts to resolve them after 1864 posed deep problems because the dynamics wrought themselves within the reality of religious life. They embodied the fundamental paradox of toleration and confessionalisation when the former began to question the paramount importance that the latter placed on ritual matters.

Conclusion

The promulgation of the ritual re-evaluation in the late eighteenth century marks a departure from previous Church thought. The previous attitude that conflated rite and dogma came under question. However, it had its limits. Ultimately even Platon, the foremost and most important advocate of the ritual re-evaluation, proved reluctant to realise it in practice. The problem was that the new perspective on ritual clashed with a century-long confessionalisation project. Confessionalisation, both in Russia and in Europe, necessarily accentuated the value of ritual as a means for constructing denominational identity and also as a way of shaping and controlling the behaviour of the faithful. The basic core of the ritual re-evaluation contradicted this by demoting the relative importance of rites in order to promote grounds for religious reconciliation. At its heart was the idea that ritual might be a matter for individual choice based on the demands of conscience. Since ritual did not impact on the matter of dogma, why should it not be a matter for individual preference? This suggestion flew in the face of a confessional attitude whereby the Church had to assert control over rite for the purposes of forging a distinct denomination. Understanding this contradiction helps us to explain Platon's paradoxical actions. Just because he became interested in furnishing the intellectual grounds for reconciliation with Old Belief did not undo the impact of confessionalisation.

One of the most interesting lessons to be drawn from the foundation of *Edinoverie* lies in the role played by the relationship between the Church and the state. In the 1760s, the Russian government embarked on a new policy of toleration towards Old Belief. Whilst it did not afford the schism a place within the multi-confessional establishment of the Russian Empire, it did offer them numerous freedoms and privileges. This attitude was self-interested, as Potemkin and others demonstrated. Not only did the state hope to bring

the Old Believers under their surveillance but it also hoped to mobilise them as settlers in scarcely populated borderlands.

Due to this change, the Church found that campaigns of coercion were no longer practicable. With the withdrawal of the state's muscle, the Church had to find a new way of dealing with the schism. This coincided with the emergence of Church intellectuals dedicated to translating the Enlightenment ideas propounded by Catherine the Great and her court into theological terms. The dovetailing of both trends led to the ritual re-evaluation whereby the Russian Orthodox Church began to downplay the significance of ritual so as to suggest some degree of reconciliation between themselves and the Old Believers was possible. Some of the schismatics seized upon this opportunity in order to resolve the fundamental problem of a legitimate priesthood, an asset they had been lost as a consequence of their eschatological and ecclesial theologies.

From this, it should be clear why *Edinoverie* proved difficult to realise in practice. Whilst all three parties had come to support the possibility of unity, each did so for their own particular reasons that were difficult to reconcile with each other. Potemkin, along with Catherine, backed the idea of *Edinoverie* out of *raison d'état*. This collided with the concerns of Nikodim and his successors who were more interested in receiving an unquestionably legitimate source of sacramental grace. The Church too proved to be an equivocal partner, generally seeking to maintain its own control on who could and could not be admitted into the *ecclesia*. Intellectual support for a union based on the ritual re-evaluation was contradicted by confessional anxiety about the possibility that insincere *edinovertsy* could both damage the rituals of the Church and spread apostasy in the flock.

The result was a series of stops and starts that were not concluded even with the promulgation of a Synodal edict in 1798. It took the personal interest of Emperor Paul himself to bring the vacillation to a conclusion. His intervention in favour of Old Believers whom Platon and others deemed to be extreme and undesirable forced the Church to act rapidly in order to keep the matter of *Edinoverie* and the terms of conversion within its own domain. Seizing on a fairly moderate set of proposals, Platon and then Amvrosii were able to cement into place a settlement that reflected directly the desire of the Church to protect the flock from the questionable motives of the new *edinovertsy*.

The settlement of 1800 is an example of the eighteenth century relationship between Church and state discussed by Gregory Freeze whereby 'for lack of interest or time, the

civil government accorded routine operational autonomy to the Church; when state and Church interests diverged, however, that parallelism gave rise to direct conflict and competition.⁹⁶ The struggle in this case was not about the Church seeking even a moderate change in the Synodal structure forged in 1721 by Peter the Great or the state seeking the complete subordination of the Church. Rather it was a contest over jurisdiction. The schism was both a civil and an ecclesiastical issue and had been since its emergence. For the state, it was an issue of trying to expand its control over a section of the populace that had escaped its limited tools for surveillance and fiscal extraction whereas for the Church it was a matter of doctrinal truth and ecclesial authority. In the period between 1667 and 1762, the Orthodox hierarchy and the Russian government had largely been in agreement over how to deal with the schism. Pressure was the preferred method. However, the emergence of a more tolerant approach in the court caused a divergence between the two. Both sought to make unity in faith suit their own interests and designs. This parting of ways proved difficult to resolve because it posed a fundamental question: how, in a country where Church was so closely connected with the state, could the former reconcile itself to existing in a multi-confessional empire that the latter was determined to stabilise and manage through the means of system of religious toleration? And how could confessionalisation be combined with the ritual re-evaluation and toleration more generally?

Many questions remained unresolved. What of the anathemas? Was the aim of the settlement to integrate the *edinovertsy* into the Orthodox Church or was it designed to separate them into a quarantine zone? If the aim was integration, then how was this to be achieved? Were rituals of secondary importance? These queries were to prove hotly contested points in the coming century. Each time they were discussed, the basic and most fundamental contradictions contained with Platon's settlement were to come to the fore. Integration was opposed to separation; confession was counterpoised to conscience; and ritual tolerance placed against ritual exclusivity. These were the three fault lines running deep through the rules and the Moscow Metropolitan's own thinking. Underwriting it all was a suspicion of the motives of the converts and anxiety for the Orthodox confession.

⁹⁶ Freeze, *The Russian Levites*, 16.

II: Edinoverie Transformed, 1801-1855

'If I was a member of the Holy Synod,' answered the priest, 'then I would directly give the opinion that there must not be any schism at all! What are its teachings? In which ecumenical council did we review and confirm them? Ignorance alone is sheltered in them and it is the business of the government not to allow this but rather to enlighten the people!' 'And if the people do not want to accept this enlightenment?' 'It is better to punish them than to leave them in the gloom...' - A. F. Pisemskii, People of the Forties (1869)¹

Introduction

On 30 March 1840, the keys to the priestly Troitskaia chapel in Nizhnii Tagil were handed over to the local gendarme in the name of the Tsar and the governor of Perm'.² This marked a victory for both the Orthodox mission and local *edinovertsy*, both of whom had been striving to gain possession of the temple for several years.³ The chapel was the heart of the schism in the area, the central castle to which all the other temples were 'border fortresses'.⁴

The Old Believers reacted to news of the transfer with unmitigated rage: 'furiously driving away the sentry who guarded the doors of the chapel, they ripped off the seal but still could not succeed in breaking down the door.' The police tried to calm the situation by arresting the most rowdy of the schismatics. However, the crowd did not disperse. When news came later in the evening that the *edinovertsy* were to begin praying, the Old Believers cried out to the Virgin to open the doors: when Mary proved ineffective, an iron crowbar was applied instead. The occupation of the chapel began, with the doors being locked and the windows sealed. Negotiations to end it proved futile.

Finally the order came from St. Petersburg 'to cleanse the chapel of the mutineers and leave it in the instruction of the [*Edinoverie*] priest'.⁵ The police brought a fire engine and shot water through an upper window, drenching those inside. As the police pushed into

¹ A. F. Pisemskii, *Sobranie sochinenii v devyati tomakh*, vol. 5 (Moscow, 1956), 264.

² N. Varushkin, "O edinoverii v nizhnetagil'skom zavode i ego okrug," *Pravoslavnyi Sobesednik*, no. II, (1866), 172. For more on *Edinoverie* in this region, see O. L. Kut'ev, "Edinoverie v Permskikh votchinakh stroganovykh (30-e - 50-e gg. XIX v.)," *Mir staroobriadchestva* 4: Zhivye traditsii: Resultaty i perspektivy kompleksnykh issledovaniy Russkogo staroobriadchestva (1998): 275–82 and A. S. Palkin, "K istorii vnutrenii zhizni edinovercheskikh obshchin Ekaterinburga i Nizhnego Tagila: ot konfrontatsii k ob'edineniiu," *Vestnik museia "Nev'ianskaia ikona"* 4 (2013): 186–97.

³ On 18 June 1837, the secret committee on Old Belief had considered another case from Perm' province and had declared that only if all the schismatics of a given community converted could the chapel be transferred to *Edinoverie*. The *edinovertsy* were told to build a new church instead. *Sobranie postanovlenii po chasti raskola*. (London, 1863), 184–185.

⁴ Varushkin, "O edinoverii," no. I (1866): 10.

⁵ Ibid., no. II, (1866): 180.

the building, women assaulted them with copper crosses: ‘many bled.’ Even when the main room was taken, some holdouts barricaded themselves in the baptismal aisle with a wall built from icons. If the hope was that the gendarmes would not dare assault such a holy barrier, they were mistaken. The police succeeded in driving the remainder out. On 18 May, ‘the *Edinoverie* priest raised a cross on the Holy Troitskaia church – a symbol of the victory of truth and peace over the error and tumult of the schism.’⁶

The seizure of the Troitskaia chapel is but one instance of persecution against Old Belief during the reign of Nicholas I. This was Russia’s confessional age, the point at which Church and state launched on a joint campaign to end religious dissidence in the Empire, when ‘the distinction between investigating civil crimes and investigating matters of faith broke down.’⁷ In 1833, Nicholas and his education minister Sergi Uvvarov had declared the guiding principle of the government to be ‘Orthodoxy, autocracy and nationality.’ In the name of the first part of this trinity, Old Believers, Uniates and other religious minorities found themselves subjected to ever increasing levels of pressure to convert to the official faith.⁸ *Edinoverie* was incorporated fully into the campaign of coercion, functioning as the carrot to the stick of property seizure, imprisonment and exile. In the process, it was transformed. Not only did its numbers sky rocket but it was also made thoroughly dependent on policies of religious intolerance.

This was a remarkable change of fortune. In the first quarter century of its existence, *Edinoverie* faced redundancy. Alexander I was completely indifferent in its propagation. Although there was a turn away from the toleration of his grandmother after 1815, the commitment to allowing legal Old Believer priests remained, hampering *Edinoverie*’s appeal. Nor did the Church show much passion for spreading unity in faith. They remained inured in the same confessional anxiety that had made Platon so reluctant to realise *Edinoverie* in the first place. However, church-state relations shifted under Nicholas I. More and more issues were taken out of the Church’s hands and dealt with by the high level bureaucratic committees that were Nicholas’ typical *modus operandi*.

⁶ Ibid., 188.

⁷ T. Marsden, “The Crisis of Religious Toleration in Mid Nineteenth-Century Imperial Russia: The State and the Old Believers, 1842-55” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oxford, 2011), 17.

⁸ For Uvarov’s trinity, see N. V. Riasanovsky, *Nicholas I and Official Nationality in Russia, 1825-1855* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959). For the attack on the Uniates, see T. Weeks, “Between Rome and Tsargrad: The Uniate Church in Imperial Russia,” in R. P. Geraci and M. Khodarkovsky, eds., *Of Religion and Empire. Missions, Conversion, and Tolerance in Tsarist Russia* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001), 74–77.

Hierarchs had little choice but to comply when the Tsar became personally interested in utilising *Edinoverie* as a means to confessionalise Russia.

This chapter provides a brief summary of *Edinoverie* in this period as it confronted first irrelevance and then transformation. The aim is to point to general trends of the era. The major themes and conclusions of the chapter will be thoroughly fleshed out when we turn to the structures of *Edinoverie* in chapter IV.

Irrelevance

When studying the course of religious toleration between 1801 and 1855, historians have traditionally pinpointed the break with Catherinian leniency in 1815. The remaining decade of Alexander's rule and the entirety of that of his successor are seen as a continuum of repression, albeit one that was hindered by a theoretical commitment to toleration.⁹ Thomas Marsden has recently complicated this vision by arguing that 'the turn against toleration under Alexander I has, however, been exaggerated and it was during the reign of Nicholas that fundamental shifts, which have so far been overlooked, occurred.'¹⁰ He has emphasised that toleration remained a 'fundamental notion' until the end of the 1840s when changes in the Old Believer world provoked a shift towards religious persecution. *Edinoverie* offers another perspective. The key juncture in its story is 1825: this year marked the end of Alexandrine indifference.

Alexander I stated that his policy towards religious dissent was the following: 'the general rule that I have undertaken in errors of these kind...is not to make any coercion of conscience and not to investigate the internal confession of faith: but also not to allow any external sign of apostasy from the Church and to strictly prohibit any temptation, not as a kind of heresy but as a violation of the general commonweal and order.'¹¹ He treated heterodoxy as a civil, rather than a religious, affair throughout his reign. The difference between before and after 1815 was that the division between secular and religious offence became increasingly blurred.

⁹ M. N. Vasil'evskii, *Gosudarstvennaia sistema otnoshenii k staroobriadtsam v tsarstvovanie imperatora Nikolaia I* (Kazan, 1914), 5–16; P. Pera, "The Secret Committee on the Old Believers: Moving Away from Catherine II's Policy of Religious Toleration," in R. Bartlett, ed., *Russia in the Age of Enlightenment* (London: Macmillan, 1990), 222–41; I. Paert, *Old Believers, Religious Dissent and Gender in Russia, 1760–1850* (Manchester, 2003), 186 – 193; 195–201.

¹⁰ Marsden, "The Crisis of Religious Toleration," 15.

¹¹ *Obzor meropriiati ministerstva vnutrennikh del po raskolu s 1802 po 1881 god* (St. Petersburg, 1903), 45.

In the first fifteen years of his reign, Alexander remained committed to the policies of Catherine II. Utility to the state was of primary importance. Old Belief had to be drawn out of seclusion so that it could be subjected to greater degrees of surveillance and control. Equally, the schismatics needed to be denuded of their ‘ignorance’ and ‘fanaticism’ if they were to serve as productive and loyal members of society. For the priestly concords, this meant easing their ability to obtain clerics. In 1803, Alexander firstly allowed some Old Believers in Nizhnii Novgorod to obtain a clergyman from Irgiz and secondly informed the governor general of Ukraine not to exile the priests of the *beglopopovtsy*. Doing so ‘could further embitter the schismatics in their superstition and deprive them of the means to baptise [children] and bury the dead. We should tolerate them, looking at them through our fingers, so to speak, without however giving them explicit patronage.’¹² In terms of the priestless, Alexander transferred the Preobrazhenskoe cemetery in Moscow to police control and gave it a firm legal basis in 1809.¹³

However, the Church was becoming progressively more concerned by the tolerant approach of the government. Both Dixon and Freeze have identified the reign of Alexander I as the point when fear of the schism and other religious groups became the Church’s primary motivation for further confessionalisation, rather than the need to fight superstition and ‘Christianise’ the population that had fuelled it for much of the eighteenth century.¹⁴ This too was connected with the daunting growth of Old Belief during Catherine’s reign as the number of its adherents had massively increased.¹⁵ The administrative and educational reforms that had been in gestation for over a century were almost complete by the beginning of Alexander’s reign. They were topped in 1808-1814 by a comprehensive re-organisation of church schooling that would finally produce the kind of clergy required to enforce Church discipline.¹⁶ The doctrinal, institutional and liturgical reforms undertaken since the 1660s had given shape to a distinctive and combative Orthodox confession, capable of taking the fight to Old Belief. However, it

¹² *Sobranie*, 21–22.

¹³ Paert, *Old Believers*, 69.

¹⁴ G. L. Freeze, “Rechristianization of Russia: The Church and Popular Religion, 1750-1850,” *Studia Slavica Finlandensia* 6 (1990): 107; S. Dixon, “The Russian Orthodox Church in Imperial Russia, 1721-1917,” in M. Angold, ed., *The Cambridge History of Christianity. Vol. 5, Eastern Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 329–330.

¹⁵ Paert, *Old Believers*, 61.

¹⁶ Z. P. Tinina, *Samoderzhavie i russkaia pravoslavnaia tserkov’ v pervoi chetverti XIX veka* (Volgograd, 1999), 44–73.

awaited a state that did not believe in ‘limiting the church’s authority and deemphasizing its confessional exclusivity.’¹⁷

After 1815, the views of the state and the Church began to converge. The Preobrazhenskoe cemetery lost its legal status and its reformist leader Sergei Gnusin was imprisoned in 1822.¹⁸ The governor of Saratov asked how to proceed with the construction of a new priestly chapel. He was told by the Committee of Ministers to destroy the new building whilst leaving the old ones intact.¹⁹ However, in 1822, a law was passed that allowed the *beglopovtsy* to continue receiving priests so long as they had no criminal records.²⁰ While Paert holds that this measure was ‘very limited’ in its scope and was intended to provoke conversions from the *bespopovtsy*, its impact on *Edinoverie*’s growth was undoubtedly damaging.²¹ It offered the hope to the schismatics that they could gain priests without conversion to *Edinoverie* and subordination to the Synod.

A secret government commission founded in 1820 to formulate policy on Old Belief went a step further. In 1821, it considered the application of a Ekaterinburg schismatic to obtain a priest from the Orthodox Church. Rather than recommend *Edinoverie*, the commission proposed a plan to have Orthodox priests renounce the Church and then be sent by provincial governors to the Old Believers. Once there, they would act as secret missionaries who would gradually draw the schismatics back to Orthodoxy. ‘In effect, the committee had taken the unprecedented step of including the government in the internal affairs of the Orthodox Church: its authority over its own priests and monks would now be exercised by the provincial government with the advice of the local bishop.’²²

Metropolitan Serafim (Glagolevskii) of St. Petersburg put all of his energies into defeating the idea, protesting to the Tsar that to follow the proposal would be unpractical, uncanonical and would amount to confirming that the schism was legitimate in the eyes of the government.²³ The scheme was foiled but it is fortunate that the Metropolitan did not know how far Alexander was willing to go. In a visit to Ekaterinburg in 1824, the Emperor met with the petitioner who had started the process and suggested to him that the

¹⁷ R. L. Nichols, “Old Belief Under Surveillance during the Reign of Alexander I,” in G. B. Michels and R. L. Nichols, eds., *Russia’s Dissident Old Believers 1650-1950* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 187.

¹⁸ Paert, *Old Believers*, 188–190.

¹⁹ *Sobranie.*, 39.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 52–53.

²¹ Paert, *Old Believers*, 191.

²² Nichols, “Old Belief,” 190.

²³ *Ibid.*, 191.

best solution would be to get an Orthodox bishop to join Old Belief.²⁴ Both this recommendation and the proposal for secret missionaries suggest that while Alexander was considering active interference in the internal affairs of the schism in order to provoke conversion, he wanted to do so by completely abrogating the Church's control over its own clergy and bishops. No less than this, he completely ignored the Church's own plan for bringing the schismatics under the aegis of mitre and crown, *Edinoverie*. Had secret missionaries been deployed or a bishop dispatched to Ekaterinburg, then *Edinoverie* would have been redundant. Both schemes amounted to a replacement for *Edinoverie* under the full control of the secular provincial administration.

Given the legitimisation of Old Believer priests that had gone on throughout Alexander's reign, it is no wonder that *Edinoverie* barely grew at all in the first twenty-five years of its existence. Only ten parishes were founded in the entire period.²⁵ The committee's recommendation and Alexander's proposal in Ekaterinburg imply that the tsar and his leading advisors were not content with Platon's solution to the Old Believer problem, perhaps because it reflected too many of the Church's confessional anxieties to be a truly effective means for drawing in schismatics. This indifference is reflected in the fact that virtually no legislation was passed on the subject of *Edinoverie* between 1800 and 1825.

The one change made was the establishment of a typography in Moscow in 1818 to supply the *edinovertsy* with liturgical books. However, it took nearly two decades for this to come to fruition, as church hierarchs and statesmen argued over the purpose of the typography. Should it be under the Church's authority or should it function as a legal Old Believer press?²⁶ The final decision was a Church victory and reflected Alexander's own turn away from tolerance. The press was firmly under Synodal control and Alexander also imposed prohibitions against the Old Believers publishing, selling or buying their own literature from outside the typography.²⁷

Indifference to *Edinoverie* also emerged from the side of the Church. Whilst one or two prelates took personal interest in the development of *Edinoverie* in their dioceses, most of

²⁴ Ibid., 193.

²⁵ R. V. Kaurkin and O. A. Pavlova, *Edinoverie v Rossii: ot zarozhdeniia idei do nachala XX veka* (St. Petersburg, 2011), 95.

²⁶ For this conflict between Church and state on this issue, see I. V. Pochinskaia, "Iz istorii organizatsii edinovercheskoi tipografii v Moskve," in *Ural'skii sbornik. Istoriiia. Kul'tura. Religiiia*, no. IV (2001), 143–51.

²⁷ PSZ, vol. XXXV, no. 27611 and vol. XXXVII, no. 28142.

the others and indeed the Synod itself showed no inclination to pressure its spread.²⁸ An 1802 response to some potential converts made it clear that all applications would be thoroughly vetted for ‘their true recognition of the holiness, authority, fidelity and firmness of the confession of the Greco-Russian Church and with unfeigned penitence about their former errors.’²⁹ Shleev argued in his history that the Synod considered any attempt to negotiate with the rules of Platon as a sign of insincerity that merited refusal.³⁰ Changes to the 1800 settlement were clearly off the table. Diocesan prelates were even less flexible in their approach. An 1822 attempt to obtain a *Edinoverie* priest in Chelabinsk to support *edinovertsy* 300 versts distant from their church was rejected because ‘there are parish churches and Orthodox priests adjacent.’³¹ This strict and inflexible approach came from confessionalisation now being more firmly motivated by fear of Old Belief. *Edinoverie*’s formation already reflected confessional anxieties. With Old Belief now looming ever stronger, the Church felt no inclination to dismantle the safeguards that Platon had put in place to prevent converts tempting the Orthodox to the schism. The *edinovertsy* were so few in number that their concerns were hardly pressing.

Edinoverie thus faced obsolescence almost immediately after it was founded. Especially before 1815, the atmosphere of toleration meant the Old Believers faced minimal interference from the government and also had fairly free access to clergy. The secret commission showed that the state evidently believed that Platon had not gone far enough to bring the troubling problem of the schism to an end. Indeed, so inadequate had *Edinoverie* proven that the commission and the Tsar considered removing the matter of converting the schism from the Church’s hands entirely. The Church too saw no need to act further. As the motives behind confessionalisation shifted more firmly to antagonism with the schism, it was hardly necessary to further a settlement that compromised the ritual distinction between the two groups. The clash between Church and state in the secret committee was a sign of the future. The state was willing to be a participant in missionary activities but it thought the best way of doing so was to trespass on the Church’s prerogatives.

²⁸ Amvrosii (Podobedov) was accredited with having sponsored *Edinoverie*’s foundation in Petersburg zealously. A. I. Prostoserdov, *Volkovskoe edinovercheskoe kladbishche. k stoletiiu ego Blagoveshchenskoi tserkvi, 1816-1916*. (Petrograd, 1916), 24.

²⁹ *Sobranie postanovlenii po chasti raskola, sostoivshikh po vedomstvu sv. sinoda*, vol. I (St. Petersburg, 1860), 16.

³⁰ Simon (Shleev), *Edinoverie v svoem vnutrennem razvitii* (Moscow, 2004), 116–119.

³¹ N. Chernavskii, *Orenburgskaia eparkhiia v proshlom i nastoiashchem*, vol. X, *Trudy Orenburgskoi uchenoi arkhivnoi kommissii* (Orenburg, 1901), 221.

The Confessional Age

The three decades of rule by Nicholas I fundamentally transformed the fate of Orthodoxy, Old Belief and *Edinoverie*. The Church found in the Tsar a willing partner in the repression of its religious enemies but at the same time it was more strictly subordinated to the whims of secular officials. The Old Believers came under sustained attack. Property was confiscated, church buildings closed and leaders imprisoned or sent into exile. However, priestly Old Belief received a new leadership structure in the form of the Belaia Krinitza hierarchy, founded in Bosnia in 1846. *Edinoverie*'s numbers drastically increased from 10 churches in 1825 to 110 by 1845.³² Many of these new parishes were based on the riches seized from the Old Believers: books, icons, antimensia, chapels and monasteries were placed into their keeping. *Edinoverie*'s incorporation into coercive tactics had several long-term problems.

In terms of the relationship between Church and state, Nicholas's reign marked a departure from eighteenth century precedents. The Petrine Church had largely been able to keep control of its jurisdiction over the ecclesiastical domain. The ober-procurators of the Synod had not been chiefs of the institution but rather were the Tsar's watchdogs. The power balance under Alexander began to shift as the government intruded more and more on matters that had once been seen as purely belonging to the Church. At first, Nicholas I attempted to allow the Church to maintain its own initiative. However, when its implementation of reform proved too slow and ineffectual, Nicholas took the step of removing the matter from the Synod's control and placing it under the jurisdiction of one of the informal bureaucratic commissions of which he was so fond: 'the Synod became primarily a consultative and supervisory organ, a passive board of trustees, not the collegial command center envisioned by Peter the Great, formulating policy and overseeing its implementation.'³³ Baron Nikolai Protasov, Nicholas' ober-procurator from 1836, was something like a secular director of the Synod. He enhanced the power of the position by taking the right to appoint the secretaries of the consistories, enabling him to place his own agents at the centre of diocesan administration.³⁴ The bureaucratic subordination of the Church to the state was never total but the interference of the secular

³² T. Verkhovskii, *Starodub'e. Zapiski prot. S.-Peterb. nikol'sk. edinoverchesk. tserkvi T. A. Verkhovskogo, vysochaishe komandirovannogo v 1845-1848 g. gosudarem imp. Nikolaem Pavlovichem dlia ustroistva edinoveriia v Chernigovsk. staroobriadchesk. posadakh.* (Kazan', 1874), 7.

³³ G. L. Freeze, *Parish Clergy in 19th Century Russia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 20.

³⁴ D. W. Edwards, "The System of Nicholas I in Church-State Relations," in R. L. Nichols and T. G. Stavrou, eds., *Russian Orthodoxy under the Old Regime* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1978), 158.

government in traditional Church matters began to provoke discontent with the Synodal system in the decades after Nicholas' demise, first among the clergy and then the episcopate.³⁵

While the Church lost autonomy under Nicholas, it also gained the support of the state in the suppression of religious dissent. Unlike most of his immediate predecessors, Nicholas did not see toleration as the best possible means to ensure the stability of his empire or the surest way of bringing cloistered dissenters under the gaze of the state. Their subordination to the Church was the most effective means of surveillance and control, hence Nicholas' elevation of Orthodoxy to being a central component of his ruling ideology in 1833. Opposition to the Church was henceforth disloyalty to the state. As he told Old Believers in Dobrianka in May 1845 when they presented him with bread and salt in a traditional act of submission: 'I do not want your bread and salt, you are not my loyal subjects! You don't go the church of God to pray.' Their chapel was nothing more than 'a coven of outlaws: your priests are deserters, violators of oaths, traitors to their duties.'³⁶ For Nicholas, the interests of state and Church coincided. The Church feared apostasy and wanted forcible action against the schism while the state desired the repression of dissent in order to secure loyalty, stability and control.

The way in which confessionalisation, *Edinoverie*, and the intervention of the state in Church business coalesced is demonstrated by Nicholas' actions after his encounter in Dobrianka. Protasov got the Synod to ask the bishop of Kaluga to dispatch a *Edinoverie* priest to the region to oversee the construction of a church in the town. However, the bishop delayed and so the ober-procurator sought out an interview with Timofei Verkhovskii, priest of the Petersburg Nikol'skaia parish.³⁷ Satisfied with the cleric's knowledge of the old rite, Protasov presented him to the Emperor and the crown prince on 5 August 1845: Verkhovskii noted that Nicholas' knowledge of schismatic singing was so good it was as if 'he himself sung in an Old Believer choir.'³⁸ He was then dispatched to Chernigov, with the Synod and the Metropolitan of St. Petersburg being informed as an afterthought. On 29 August, Nicholas and the Tsarevich were in Dobrianka to attend a

³⁵ Freeze, *Parish Clergy*, 21–22.

³⁶ Verkhovskii, *Starodub'e*, 4–5.

³⁷ For biographical details of Timofei Verkhovskii, see *O sluzhbe protoiereia S. Peterburgskoi edinovercheskoi nikol'skoi tserkvi, Timofeiia Verkhovskogo. Kopia s formuliarnogo spiska za 1871 god.* (St Petersburg, 1872) and T. Verkhovskii, *Timofei Aleksandrovich Verkhovskii, protoierei Nikolaevskoi edinovercheskoi, chto na nikolaevskoi ultise, S.-Peterburgskoi tservki. Zapiski o ego zhizni, sostavlennymi samim* (St. Petersburg, 1887).

³⁸ Verkhovskii, *Starodub'e*, 20.

liturgy in the new church. Verkhovskii blessed him with the two-fingered sign of the cross and the Tsar ‘promised on behalf of himself and the heir that they [the Old Believers] would have priests who would always fulfil the liturgy by the old rites.’³⁹ This example shows how the state could commandeer clergy from their parishes for missionary work with only minimal consultation of the Church authorities and gives a real sense of Nicholas’ personal commitment both to confessionalisation and *Edinoverie*.

The campaign against Old Belief was aggressive. Legislation released from 1825 onwards cut deep into the liberties the schism had accumulated since 1762. They were forbidden from building new chapels or repairing those that had existed before 1825.⁴⁰ Priests could no longer be legally obtained.⁴¹ Old Believer marriage was considered illegitimate in the eyes of the state, thus depriving children of the right to inheritance.⁴² However, as Marsden has shown, Nicholas and his government held back somewhat because the principle of toleration remained respected: ‘religious toleration was seen as a fundamental characteristic of Russia’s identity as a modern European power and a commitment to toleration remained deeply, if awkwardly, embedded in the values of the central agencies and the governing elite.’⁴³ Old Belief was never declared illegal. Its existence was officially permitted, with some signs of secular criminality generally being required before confiscations and arrests were made. Only in the mid 1840s did treating schismatic beliefs as a religious crime, rather than a civil one, become the norm. This is when the most dramatic events of repression occurred, such as the utter destruction of the Vyg monastery and the 1854 law compelling merchants to join either Orthodoxy or *Edinoverie* or face losing their *soslovie* privileges.⁴⁴

Regardless of the commitment to the principle of toleration, the laws enacted against Old Belief certainly brought considerable booty into the hands of the Church throughout the reign, a sign of the determination of the government to pressure Old Belief. N. V. Pivovarova estimates that tens of thousands of items were collected in the Ministry of

³⁹ Ibid., 81.

⁴⁰ *Sobranie*, 72.

⁴¹ Ibid., 77.

⁴² I. Paert, “Regulating Old Believer Marriages: Ritual, Legality, and Conversion in Nicholas I’s Russia,” *Slavic Review* 63, no. 3 (2004): 555–76.

⁴³ Marsden, “The Crisis of Religious Toleration,” 15.

⁴⁴ For the end of the Vyg monastery, see R. O. Crummey, *Old Believers and the World of Antichrist. The Vyg Community and the Russian State, 1694-1855* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1970), 209–218; For the law targeting the merchants, see A. S. Beliajeff, “The Rise of the Old Orthodox Merchants of Moscow 1771-1894” (Ph.D. dissertation, Syracuse University, 1975), 164–175 and Marsden, “The Crisis of Religious Toleration,” 232–263.

Internal Affairs' archive alone in this period.⁴⁵ In 1907, the Viatka consistory submitted records of all the Old Believer property that they had received from confiscations over the nineteenth century. The catalogue is well over a hundred pages long, with most items having been confiscated in the reign of Nicholas I.⁴⁶ Much of this property ended up with the *edinovertsy*.

The turn from toleration to more direct religious persecution occurred in part because of events among the priestly schismatics. By depriving Old Believers of the right to obtain priests from Irgiz, Nicholas had hoped to both limit their religious life and push them into the arms of *Edinoverie*.⁴⁷ However, it had the unintended consequence of pushing the *beglopopovtsy* to resume their long search for an Orthodox prelate in the Churches of East. Much to the consternation of state and Church, they found one. Ambrosios (Pappa-Georgopoli), the Metropolitan of Sarajevo, had been removed from his position for his support of Serbian rebels against the Ottoman sultanate but he had not been defrocked. After negotiations with Old Believers and permission from the Austrian government, Amvrosii consecrated two *beglopopovtsy* as bishops. Thus a new concord was founded in Bosnia in 1846. It was known subsequently as the Belaia Krinitza hierarchy, after the location of its headquarters, or alternatively as the Austrian priesthood.⁴⁸ This confirmed Nicholas' views on Old Belief as fundamentally disloyal to himself and Russia since the schismatics now appeared to be tools in the hands of Austria.⁴⁹ The new threat, combined with the emergence of disturbing manifestations of priestless Old Belief, helped push Nicholas into the extreme repressive measures of the latter part of his reign.⁵⁰

Edinoverie was an integral part in the actions taken against the schism. If Old Believers were so opposed to the new rites that conversion to Orthodoxy proper was unthinkable, then there was always the option of *Edinoverie*, where the old rites and certain elements of Old Believer parish administration were maintained. The fact that *Edinoverie* parishes usually inherited the former places of worship, complete with liturgical equipment and

⁴⁵ N. V. Pivovarova, "Kabinet raskol'nic'ikh veshei' ministerstva vnutrennikh del: ob odnom nesostoiavshemsia muzee staroobriadcheskoi bogolosluzhebnoi kul'tury," *Izvestiia Ural'skogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta* 6, no. 85 (2010): 237.

⁴⁶ RGIA, f. 1284, op. 185, d. 88, l. 144-265.

⁴⁷ Seizure of part of the Irgiz monastery had already begun in 1829 when a substantial group of monks converted and brought the buildings with them. *Polnoe sobranie postanovlenii i rasporyazhenii po vedomstvu pravoslavnogo ispovedaniia Rossiiskoi imperiia. Tsarstovanie gosudaria imperatora Nikolaia I.*, vol. I (Petrograd, 1915), 369-370.

⁴⁸ N. Subbotin, *Istoriia tak nazyvaemogo Avstriiskogo, ili Belokrinit'skogo, sviashchenstva.*, 2 vols. (Moscow, 1895 and 1897) and Marsden, "The Crisis of Religious Toleration," 40-72.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 52-54.

⁵⁰ The problem was the sudden discovery of the *beguny*, the Wanderers. Ibid., 106-110.

capital, made *Edinoverie* all the more attractive. Through conversion to it, the Old Believers could maintain their community's ownership of valued religious property and see their chapels reopened for divine service. The formation of *Edinoverie* parishes also had the effect of splitting schismatic communities into mutually hostile groups. Finally, the new churches and their priests could act as police agents for the state and the Church by keeping a close eye on the schism: '*Edinoverie* was therefore a means not just to protect the authority of the Church but also to assure greater state control over the Old Believers and obtain more accurate information about the population.'⁵¹

The state's interest in *Edinoverie* was signified by a sizeable amount of legislative activity on its behalf. It was becoming clear that the rules of Platon were either not being enforced or were in some way unfit for purpose. Thus a spate of edicts tried to fill in some of gaps in the 1800 settlement by legislating on marriage with schismatics (the latter had to convert) and where the *edinovertsy* could be buried (in either Orthodox or Old Believer cemeteries).⁵² In terms of ensuring that Platon's rules were enforced, Nicholas issued an edict on 5 April 1845 requiring the bishops to stringently ensure that the integrity of the old rituals was respected and that the consistories were not involved in the running of *Edinoverie* parishes. This edict also created the position of *Edinoverie* superintendents to assist bishops with the management of the ever-increasing number of *edinovertsy*.⁵³ The growth of *Edinoverie* also challenged the confessional dividing lines. The fifth rule, forbidding Orthodox conversion to *Edinoverie*, came under question. On 8 August 1832, a change was made that reduced the stringency of Platon's prohibition. Whereas the old rule stated that conversion to *Edinoverie* could only be permitted if the individual had never attended the Orthodox sacraments, the new amendment stated the waiting period was to be a minimum of ten years.⁵⁴

While this change mitigated the problem slightly, it did not come close to resolving it. Nicholas was personally confronted with the issue in 1834 when a schismatic who had only recently belonged to the Orthodox Church asked to be allowed to join *Edinoverie*. The Emperor declared that the government had never before allowed someone 'to deviate from the Orthodox Church, even to the *Edinoverie* one. But so as not to give reason to the schismatics to clamour that the government divides the *Edinoverie* Church from the

⁵¹ Ibid., 45.

⁵² For marriages, see a series of edicts from between 1840 and 1842 in *Sobranie*, II: 374; 381; 384–386; For burial, see an edict from 17 March 1839 in *Obzor*, 143.

⁵³ *Trudy Moskovskogo edinovercheskogo s'ezda* (Moscow, 1910), 123–124.

⁵⁴ Kaurkin and Pavlova, *Edinoverie v Rossii*, 101.

Orthodox by decisively refusing to [allow] this peasant to join to the *Edinoverie* Church, and through this shake the *edinovertsy*, [...]leave this matter without any action or response.⁵⁵ Confronted by the Platonic contradiction between assimilation and division, Nicholas decided silence was the best course of action.

As for the Church, the hierarchy both esteemed *Edinoverie*'s missionary appeal whilst remaining fearful that it could be a gateway to the schism. Some of the bishops participated ardently in spreading *Edinoverie*. Most notable was Arkadii (Fedorov), the longstanding archbishop of Perm'.⁵⁶ He had initiated the 1832 reform.⁵⁷ In a letter to the Metropolitan of St. Petersburg dated 10 March 1851, he declared that 'the most diligent and zealous assistants to us against the schism are the 68 thousand *edinovertsy* who adorn Perm' diocese.'⁵⁸ Metropolitan Filaret (Drozdov) of Moscow was also intensively involved with *Edinoverie* matters in his diocese, pushing heavily for the seizure of parts of the Rogozhskoe and Preobrazhenskoe cemeteries in order to found *Edinoverie* parishes in their midst.⁵⁹

Others were not so confident of *Edinoverie*'s value. Bishop Elpidifor (Benediktov) of Viatka, writing to Makarii (Bulgakov) in 1855, stated that 'I consider this Church [i.e. *Edinoverie*], perhaps mistakenly, to be a kind of incomprehensible institution that in reality little corresponds to its aims, is degrading to the Orthodox Church and dangerous, lest it give birth to the division of the Church and the hierarchy.'⁶⁰ Even Arkadii, whilst bishop of Orenburg in 1830, was horrified at how the absence of Orthodox churches in the Ural'sk *oblast'* had driven Orthodox parishioners to *Edinoverie* churches: 'Orthodox Christians, being compelled by extremity to go only to *Edinoverie* churches for prayers and turn only to *Edinoverie* priests with their Christian needs, do not have the pure light of true Orthodoxy and little by little leave from holy Orthodoxy...and become closer to

⁵⁵ *Sobranie*, 103–104.

⁵⁶ For a biography and some of his works, see N. Subbotin, *Arkadii arkhiepiskop Permskii i Petrozavodskii i nekotorye ego sochineniia protiv raskola* (Moscow, 1890).

⁵⁷ *Polnoe sobranie postanovlenii*, I: 629–630.

⁵⁸ "Pis'mo preosviashchennenskogo Arkadiia arkhiepiskopa Permskogo k Sankt-Peterburgskomu Mitropolitu Nikanoru," *Ekaterinburgskie eparkhial'nye vestnik*, no. 12 (1888): 286.

⁵⁹ Filaret had been dreaming of establishing a monastery near or in either cemetery since 1840. In 1854, he managed to seize chapels in both. It was only in 1862 that he established a convent in the Rogozhskoe cemetery and in 1865 a monastery in Preobrazhenskoe. V. Belikov, *Deiatel'nost' Moskovskogo mitropolita Filareta po otnosheniiu k raskolu* (Kazan, 1895), 447–499.

⁶⁰ "Pis'ma k pochivshemu v Boze vysokopreosviashchennishemu Makariiu mitropolitu Moskovskomu," *Pravoslavnoe obozrenie*, no. I (1888): 127.

the schism nesting in the settlements of Ural'sk.⁶¹ Filaret made a similar statement in 1824 to the Synod when refusing permission to an Orthodox parish to join *Edinoverie*: 'converting a general Orthodox church into a *Edinoverie* one would be destructive for the Orthodox Church.'⁶² Whatever missionary value prelates saw in *Edinoverie*, their attitudes were dominated by the fear that it would compromise Orthodoxy's confessional integrity and thus undertook only a mild change to the rules of 1800. Equally, the intensity with which many bishops promulgated *Edinoverie* probably had more to do with state pressure than any conviction in its utility.

The 1832 reform on conversion and the 1845 reminder to enforce Platon's rules reveal the long-term implications of the Platonic contradictions. The edict of 1845 was made because the government knew that maintenance of the old rite was fundamental in keeping *Edinoverie* attractive to the Old Believers. However, enforcing the protection of the old rites and further institutionalising them by creating *Edinoverie* superintendents fundamentally undermined Platon's second attached opinion, which hoped that the *edinovertsy* would eventually forget their old rituals. Confessional assimilation by means of ritual fusion was thus undercut. This can hardly have pleased men like Filaret (Drozdov) who 'looked on *Edinoverie* as a measure that had as its final goal not simply the drawing of Old Believers to the Orthodox Church but the fullest unity with the Orthodox, even in ritual.'⁶³ The edict of 1832 offered a second option for integration the by moderating the prohibitions against the Orthodox joining *Edinoverie*. However, the fact that so many of *Edinoverie*'s new recruits had been coerced into conversion meant that Platon's suspicions of insincerity were essentially justified. The converts were likely to be schismatics in everything but name who might use their new position to proselytise amongst the Orthodox. Therefore radical change or abolition to the fifth rule could not be contemplated. Only its moderation was possible but this left the basic criticism of confessional distinction intact. *Edinoverie*'s incorporation into Nicholas' confessionalisation project effectively stymied either route to the integration of *Edinoverie* into Orthodoxy. It could be achieved neither through ritual fusion nor by breaking down the confessional barriers between the two.

⁶¹ Ural'sk was the only place in the Russian Empire where *Edinoverie* preceded Orthodoxy. Chernavskii, *Orenburgskaia eparkhiia*, 293.

⁶² V. Belikov, *Deiatel'nost'*, 553.

⁶³ Ibid., 550.

Conclusion

The fate of the *edinovertsy* between 1801 and 1855 demonstrate how deeply changes in government policy influenced its evolution. The wide tolerance towards the schism and other religious minorities in the reign of Alexander posed the threat of redundancy for *Edinoverie*. Old Believers did not need to accept Platon's compromise if the government was making it painless to obtain priests who would not be subordinated to the Nikonian Synod and its episcopal hierarchy. The insignificant growth of *Edinoverie* between 1801 and 1825 meant it was an entirely marginal phenomenon and thus there was no great pressure to reform its basis or seek further institutional development. By 1822, the secret commission was considering alternatives to it.

The exact opposite is true under Nicholas. His strategy to drive schismatics into the arms of the Church was to deprive them of the major organisational basis of their religious lives: sketes, chapels, books, icons and priests. *Edinoverie* had all of these things, with the added bonuses that it was entirely legal and performed the liturgy according to the old rite. Therefore *Edinoverie* became a significant component in confessionalisation, in the attempt to achieve an unprecedented degree of religious homogeneity in a broader scheme of social disciplining and modernisation. Therefore Nicholas and the Church had to start to address some of the problems inherent in the Platonic settlement.

However, the process of confessionalisation worsened some of the paradoxes and even introduced new ones. By further institutionalising ritual difference, Nicholas blocked the process of liturgical fusion that Platon had hoped for. Simultaneously the massive influx of coerced, and thus insincere, converts meant that the Church had little reason to seek reform of those parts of the 1800 rules that created confessional barriers between Orthodoxy and *Edinoverie*. They were required all the more to protect the Orthodox from schismatic infection. However, at the same time, coercion created a flock that had to be kept within *Edinoverie*, especially when pressure from the state dropped. The best solution available was better integration of *Edinoverie* with the Church via reducing the austerity of the confessional boundaries. Confessionalisation made reform of *Edinoverie* paradoxically desirable and undesirable in the same instant.

The two reigns of Nicholas and Alexander also imparted a perplexing legacy upon the Church. Under Alexander, the Church's organisational reforms reached their fullest extent. The problem of religious dissent became the most significant motivating force for further confession building. The confessional anxieties that had informed Platon's formulation of the 1800 rules reached their high point. Initially, the state remained

committed to a relatively tolerant course, resulting in conflicting stratagems in regards to heterodoxy. However, when the state joined the Church in pursuing confessional politics after 1815, the result was unprecedented government interference. In consequence, another paradox was formed. The Church became reliant on the government for enforcing repression of religious minorities and defending the prerogatives of Orthodoxy but equally began to begrudge the intrusions into Church business that the process of confessionalisation entailed. The outcome was a confessionalised Orthodoxy that was simultaneously dependent on the imperial state and resentful of its interference.

The transformation of *Edinoverie* in the second quarter of the nineteenth century was not limited to a demographic upsurge. Its character was fundamentally altered as well. Before 1825, the few parishes that came into being were founded voluntarily by Old Believer converts. They did so either out of theological conviction or because of splits within their communities. Neither state nor Church put any great pressure on them to join. Consequently early *Edinoverie* resembled a grass-roots movement, one formed from below rather than from above. This changed dramatically after 1825. *Edinoverie* became an organ for control and surveillance, a component of confessionalisation.

III: A 'Step to Orthodoxy' No More: the Orthodox Church and Confessional

Integration, 1865-1886

"So they do not sincerely accept *Edinoverie*?" Vikhrov asked. "Ha, sincerely!" the priest smiled sadly. "Throughout Russia, this *Edinoverie* is only fog and lies for the sake of the government." – A. F. Pisemskii, *People of the Forties* (1869)¹

Introduction

On 23 July 1865, a special ceremony was held in the Troitskaia *Edinoverie* church in Moscow to join some new converts to *Edinoverie*. A large throng of people gathered at the church to observe bishop Leonid of Dmitrovsk perform the liturgy.² It was no ordinary ceremony. The five men being joined were all high profile leaders of the Belaia Krinitsa hierarchy. This was a major coup for the Orthodox Church and it was keen to broadcast its success. It had succeeded in converting three bishops, a hieromonk, an archdeacon and a hierodeacon. Filaret commented that 'undoubtedly in [the loss of] these people, the schism was deprived of a considerable part of their pseudo-hierarchy.'³

Of the five men, Filaret was in little doubt about who was the most valuable: Pafnutii (Ovchinnikov), the Old Believer bishop of Kostroma. Pafnutii was educated, erudite and possessed a remarkable oratorical gift. Filaret immediately put him to work. He was scheduled to become the abbot of a new *Edinoverie* monastery located right in the centre of the Preobrazhenskoe cemetery, the very heart of Russia's priestless Old Believer community. The government seized one of the almshouses of the cemetery and transformed it into the Nikol'skii *Edinoverie* monastery.⁴

On the surface, the appropriation of part of the Preobrazhenskoe cemetery marked the apex of confessionalising policies against Old Belief, the triumph of innumerable campaigns of coercion and confiscation. The Irgiz monastery complex, for decades a source of fugitive priests, was entirely converted to *Edinoverie* in 1857; the Vyg hermitage had been completely destroyed; the Rogozhskoe cemetery home to a *Edinoverie* convent.⁵ Across the Russian Empire, the number of *Edinoverie* parishes had

¹ A. F. Pisemskii, *Sobranie sochinenii v devyati tomakh*, vol. 5 (Moscow, 1956), 263.

² Savva, *Sobranie mnenii i otzvyvov Filareta, mitropolita Moskovskogo i Kolomenskogo, po uchebnym i tserkovno-gosudarstvennym voprosam*, vol. 5 (Moscow, 1886), 702.

³ Ibid.

⁴ For a full description, see *Ob otkrytii nikol'skogo edinoverchskogo monastyria. Istoricheskaia zapiska*. (Moscow, 1892).

⁵ For the conversion of the Irgiz monastery complex, see A. A. Naumliuk, *Tsentr staroobriadchestva na Irgize: poiavlenie, deiatel'nost', vsiamootnosheniia s vlast'iu* (Saratov, 2009), 77–89 and

mushroomed, expanding to 223 in 1864.⁶ It was the Old Believers who had paid for this impressive expansion. They had paid for it with their chapels, with their icons and with their beloved books, many of which now lay in the hands of the converts and their Synod-approved clergy. The government and the Church could be satisfied that through these *Edinoverie* churches they possessed missionary stations and surveillance posts that looked out onto hundreds of schismatic communities.

However, the triumph over Old Belief was deceptive. With the death of Nicholas I in 1855, the Russian state was moving away from the coercion of religious minorities, albeit at a typically sluggish pace. The infamous 1854 measure to deny Old Believer merchants access to the highest ranks of the guilds unless they converted to either Orthodoxy or *Edinoverie* had been repealed in 1856, very shortly after Alexander II's accession. Whilst the new tsar did not immediately abandon all of his father's measures, it was becoming clear that the government's attitude to heterodoxy was now in flux.⁷ The clearest sign of change exactly coincided with the seizure of property from Preobrazhenskoe. In 1864, Alexander created a special commission to review and reform the legislation surrounding Old Belief. As slow and unwieldy as this commission was in fulfilling its task, its formation marked the end to dramatic campaigns of confiscation sponsored by the central government. The actions taken against the Preobrazhenskoe cemetery were not therefore the sign of a continuation of Nicholas I's policies but rather their last gasp.

In the following chapter, I assess how the position of *Edinoverie* changed as the pace of persecution slackened. As we have previously commented, the Church found itself in a difficult position. The consequences of the coercion employed against the schism between 1825 and 1864 had led to a huge increase in parishes and parishioners but many of them were reluctant *edinovertsy* at best. This led the Church to be cautious about any attempt to resolve *Edinoverie*'s peripheral position on the outskirts of the Orthodox confession. However, the extension of toleration might reduce *Edinoverie*'s appeal since people were no longer being pressured into joining. The worst consequence would be that the *edinovertsy* might start fleeing to the schism in large numbers. There were thus good reasons to both demand reform and reject it.

"Obrashchenie Irgizskikh staroobriadcheeskikh monastyrei k edinoveriiu," *Pravoslavnyi sobesednik*, no. I (1858): 231–61.

⁶ M. S., *Istoricheskii ocherk edinoveriia* (St Petersburg, 1867), 179.

⁷ T. Marsden, "The Crisis of Religious Toleration in Mid Nineteenth-Century Imperial Russia: The State and the Old Believers, 1842–55" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oxford, 2011), 293.

This situation was complicated by outside pressures peculiar to the reign of Alexander II. On the one hand, a split in the Belaia Krinitza hierarchy in 1862 led to confidence that *Edinoverie* could still succeed without major changes to the 1800 settlement. On the other hand, a new and vibrant civil society was subjecting *Edinoverie* to a considerable critique. In 1869, the novelist A. F. Pisemskii had condemned the *edinovertsy* for their hypocrisy in his novel *People of the Forties*.⁸ Social concern reached its climax between 1873 and 1874 when the St. Petersburg section of the Society for the Admirers of Spiritual Enlightenment held debates on the ‘needs of *Edinoverie*.’ These garnered a significant degree of attention in the secular press and even provoked comment from Fedor Dostoevskii.⁹

There was also pressure coming from within *Edinoverie* itself. Petitions from Nizhnii Novgorod and Moscow in 1877-8 to change the rules of Platon utilised the up swell of interest in *Edinoverie* to gain a considerable amount of coverage in the secular and ecclesiastical press. No less than this, two new leaders had emerged from among the *edinovertsy*, both of them backing reform. There was the firebrand Petersburg priest Ioann Verkhovskii who in 1864 wrote a savage condemnation of Platonic *Edinoverie* and demanded the full legalisation of Old Belief. Far more moderate was Pavel Prusskii, an esteemed priestless monk who converted to the Church in 1868. Working in tandem with Professor Nikolai Subbotin of the Moscow Ecclesiastical Academy, he pushed for a new definition of unity in faith that would stress confessional solidarity in everything other than rites. In 1881 and 1886, the Synod turned this integrative project into its guiding principle.

This was confessional integration as opposed to Platon’s liturgical assimilation. He had seen gradual ritual fusion as the main path to bring the *edinovertsy* within the Orthodox confession. Pavel and Subbotin believed it would be possible to do this without the *edinovertsy* abandoning the old rituals. This would require the Church to recognise the equality of the old rites that in turn would require a change in ascribed Orthodox identity. By bringing in a second set of rites into the Orthodox confession, the Nikonian rituals could no longer define Orthodoxy’s boundaries. Instead they had to be defined through the ritual re-evaluation. Ritual tolerance had to become a marker of what it meant to be

⁸ Pisemskii, *Sobranie*, 5:263–274.

⁹ F. M. Dostoevskii, “Zasedanie obshchestva liubitelei dukhovnogo prosveshcheniia 28 marta,” in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v tridsati tomakh*, vol. 21 (Leningrad, 1980), 139–41.

Orthodox. Only then could Orthodoxy as a confession house two different rites whilst still maintaining a difference between themselves and the ritually fanatical Old Believers.

To understand how this confessional integration metamorphosed from plan into policy, I examine four topics of debate: the rules of Platon, the seventeenth century anathemas, polemical attacks on the old rites in Orthodox prayer books and *Edinoverie* bishops. These issues were not peripheral. They sat on the fault line of the three Platonic paradoxes: conscience against confession, inclusivity opposed to quarantine and ritual tolerance juxtaposed ritual exclusivity. Resolving these four questions meant resolving the contradictions.

Opportunities and Challenges

From Confessionalisation to Tolerance...and Back Again

The shift from Nicholas' confessionalisation to tolerance was one reason why reform of *Edinoverie* gathered steam in this period. Alexander II's policy towards Old Belief was usually determined by ambivalence rather than by any concrete swing to either repression or tolerance. It is telling that it took a decade for Alexander to establish a commission to review the position of Old Belief. Alexander saw the problem of Old Belief not in the legislation surrounding it but rather in the ignorance, both deliberate and accidental, of the bureaucrats who implemented it.¹⁰ Thus, in the first decade of the new reign, the change in government policy was not particularly noticeable on a legislative level. The Synod proceeded as normal, even going so far as to codify a new set of regulations governing the seizure of Old Believer property in 1858.¹¹ What changed in this first decade was not policy but the tenor of that policy. As lethargic as Alexander's approach to Old Belief was, it was still a shift compared to the intensity of Nicholas' scheme of all-out confessionalisation. The impact on *Edinoverie* of this shift was that the number of new conversions began to drop precipitously, declining to 757 in 1868, the low point of the century.¹² This is eloquent statistical testimony of the role played by Nicolaevan coercion in building *Edinoverie* and how it was affected the moment that persecution slackened even slightly.

¹⁰ P. Waldron, "Religious Toleration in Late Imperial Russia," in O. Crisp and L. Edmonson, eds., *Civil Rights in Imperial Russia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 110.

¹¹ D. V. Chichinadze, *Sbornik zakonov o raskole i sektantakh, raz''iasnennykh resheniiami pravitel'stviushchego senata i sviateishogo sinoda.*, 2nd ed. (St. Petersburg, 1899), 108–110.

¹² R. V. Kaurkin and O. A. Pavlova, *Edinoverie v Rossii: ot zarozhdeniia idei do nachala XX veka* (St. Petersburg, 2011), 165.

Reforming the laws on Old Belief gained more speed with the formation of a commission in 1864. However, it still took a decade for this committee to produce anything of substance. Its major product was a law on 19 April 1874 that gave Old Believers the rights to have their own metrical books. This meant that their marriages and offspring were legitimised, thus ending the pressure on them to turn to Orthodox or *Edinoverie* priests for baptisms and weddings.¹³ A second commission was formed immediately after. Once again, it took awhile to bare fruit. Indeed, the next piece of legislation was not passed until 1883, two years after Alexander II's assassination. This edict was more extensive as it gave the Old Believers and other religious dissidents the right to re-open their churches, repair old ones and hold private religious ceremonies. Public displays of religiosity remained forbidden.¹⁴ Quite what consequences these changes had for *Edinoverie* is difficult to tell, although M. N. Suslova has argued that the decline of *edinovertsy* in Tobol'sk from 24,343 in 1875 to 19,784 in 1885 can be attributed to the legislative changes.¹⁵

With the accession of Alexander III, the stance of the state once again underwent a major transition back to confessionalising policies. Whilst the 1883 reform that had originated in his father's reign had been designed to mobilise Old Belief as a source of potential conservative support for the Russian state, Alexander III considered religious uniformity to be the best policy for stabilising the empire.¹⁶ Conversions to *Edinoverie* returned to levels comparable to those under Nicholas I.¹⁷ The Tsar was aided by the new ober-procurator of the Synod, Konstantin Pobedonostsev. This latter day Protasov once again aimed to maximise the influence of the state over the Church. He was personally invested in *Edinoverie*, once describing it as 'that great work.'¹⁸ S. I. Alekseeva believes that it was Pobedonostsev, together with his loyal associate Subbotin, who pressured the Synod into carrying out reforms of *Edinoverie*.¹⁹ This was undoubtedly the case. Pressure for reform had been mounting since the 1860s but the Synod had been unable to resolve the divisions among the episcopate in relation to *Edinoverie* reform. Thus, it had barely done

¹³ *Obzor meropriyatii ministerstva vnutrennikh del po raskolu s 1802 po 1881 god* (St. Petersburg, 1903), 281–294.

¹⁴ PSZ, vol. III, no. 1545.

¹⁵ L. N. Suslova, "Edinoverie v Tobol'skoi gubernii vo vtoroi polovine XIX - nachale XX v.," *Problemy Istorii Rossii*, no. 7 (2008): 217.

¹⁶ Waldron, "Religious Toleration," 109–111.

¹⁷ Simon (Shleev), *Edinoverie v svoem vnutrennem razvitii* (Moscow, 2004), 9–10.

¹⁸ Quoted in S. Dixon, "Archimandrite Mikhail (Semenov) and Russian Christian Socialism," *Historical Journal* 51, no. 3 (2008): 694.

¹⁹ S. I. Alekseeva, *Sviatishii sinod v sisteme vysshikh i tsentral'nykh gosudarstvennykh uchrezhdenii poreformennoi Rossii 1856-1904 gg.*, 2nd ed. (St. Petersburg, 2006), 183–184.

anything to change the situation it inherited from the reign of Nicholas I. It took the pressure of Pobedonostsev to produce results.

Since the schism had arisen in the mid seventeenth century, the state had utilised two methods to deal with religious dissent. There was toleration, motivated by a requirement to utilise the human and financial resources of Old Belief in developing under-populated regions and supporting the government. And then there was confessionalisation, founded on the belief that religious homogeneity was the real source of stability and control. Between 1864 and 1886, the government dallied between these two alternatives. The fortunes of *Edinoverie* and the Orthodox Church were always dependent on which direction they chose.

The Belaia Krinitza hierarchy

There can be little doubt that one of the most attractive prospects of *Edinoverie* was that it offered Old Believers a canonically legitimate priesthood. The Belaia Krinitza hierarchy was a direct challenge to *Edinoverie* since it alleged that it too could offer legitimate clergymen to the schismatics, thereby ending their dependence on a rapidly dwindling supply of fugitives. It is difficult to gauge just how successful the new hierarchy was in the decade following its establishment in 1846 but by the twentieth century it was the biggest of the priestly concords, numbering 788, 425 according to official figures of 1912.²⁰ It was also consistently regarded by the Orthodox Church as one of their main rivals for the souls of its Russian flock. There were some weaknesses, not least lingering doubts over the canonicity of Metropolitan Ambrosios' actions. He had contravened the canonical prescription that two bishops needed to present in order to consecrate a third. Consequently, the hierarchy never succeeded in persuading all of the priestly concords to join its ranks.²¹ Equally, the persecution against the Belaia Krinitza hierarchy had been fierce under Nicholas I.²² Nevertheless, the hierarchy entered the era of the Great Reforms with considerable potential to disrupt the Church's efforts in converting the Old Believers to *Edinoverie*.

However, the more moderate stance of Alexander II's government to Old Belief posed difficult questions for the Belaia Krinitza hierarchy. It now had to look again at how to

²⁰ I. V. Pozdeeva, "The Silver Age of Russia's Old Belief, 1905-17," in G. B. Michels and R. L. Nichols, eds., *Russia's Dissident Old Believers 1650-1950* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 76.

²¹ R. Robson, *Old Believers in Modern Russia* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1995), 31.

²² Marsden, "The Crisis of Religious Toleration," 40-72.

relate to the Russian state. This was a critical matter, for both practical and theological reasons. The hierarchy needed accommodation with the state to better manage those flocks that it had been able to gather, especially since Alexander had had one bishop thrown into the Suzdal' monastic prison in 1859. But there was a nagging theological question. Old Believers had traditionally held that the Russian Tsar and his church were the agents of the Anti-Christ on earth. Formulating a new approach to the government therefore took contradictory paths. Some turned to Aleksandr Herzen and his circle of revolutionaries in London in the hope of an alliance that would completely overturn the Russian government in the near future.²³ This ended in abject failure, hardly surprising given that the aims of the atheistic Herzen and theocratic Old Believers were ultimately too different to co-exist harmoniously.²⁴

On 24 February 1862, another attempt to resolve the impasse was made by a council of bishops sitting in Moscow. Together, they formulated the so-called 'Circular Epistle' (*okruzhnoe poslanie*), a document aimed at demonstrating that the Russian Orthodox Church did not worship the Anti-Christ. The epistle echoes Metropolitan Platon's *Exhortation*, listing the supposed areas of conflict between the Synodal Church and priestly Old Belief and dismissing them as either irrelevant or insubstantial: 'the church that currently predominates in Russia, and equally the Greek church, does not believe in another God but in the same one as us.'²⁵ The venom of the letter was reserved for the priestless Old Believers. The idea that Russian Orthodoxy worshipped the Anti-Christ was 'blind sophistry' that 'was planted maliciously by the darkened consciences of the priestless.'²⁶ The hope behind the document was evidently that lessening the tensions between Russia's official Church and the hierarchy might result in the state looking upon the Austrians more favourably.

However, the abandonment of such a key tenet of Old Believer theology and identity caused indignation, even among some of the hierarchs. Whilst an official council called in

²³ N. Subbotin, *Raskol' kak orudie vrazhdebnykh Rossii partii* (Moscow, 1867), 118. For the most in-depth study of Old Believer relations with radical émigrés, see P. Call, *Vasily I. Kelsiev. An Encounter between the Russian Revolutionaries and the Old Believers* (Belmont, Mass.: Nordland Publishing Company, 1979). For a more modern examination, see V. Frede, "Freedom of Conscience, Freedom of Confession, and 'Land and Freedom' in the 1860s," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 13, no. 3 (2012): 561–84 and P. I. Perekrestov, "Iz istorii vzaimootnoshenii staroobriadtssev s kruzhkom A. I. Gertsena," *Staroobriadchestvo: Istoriia, Kultura, Sovremennost'* 14 (2012): 28–34.

²⁴ Frede, "Freedom of Conscience," 583.

²⁵ *Okruzhnoe poslanie staroobriadcheskikh episkopov, izdannoe 24-go fevralia 1862 goda*. (Moscow, 1911), 12–13.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 6.

1863 resolved in favour of the circular letter, the breach proved to be enduring. From this point on, the hierarchy was rent into two groups, the *okruzhniki* (those in favour of the letter) and the *protivookruzhniki* (those against). There is no doubt that the former were generally more successful, since they kept most of the key positions, monasteries and financial resources. However, the prestige of the Belaia Krinitza hierarchy was diminished. They had not managed to preserve unity for even two decades after their creation. The sheer acrimony of the dispute also left a sour taste in the mouths of many bishops, priests and laymen.

Filaret (Drozdov) believed that the split meant that ‘Orthodoxy is now given some hope that the ignorance, disorder, mutual strife, reproofs and denunciations of the pseudo-bishops will shake the confidence of the lay schismatics.’²⁷ He was not wrong. When Pafnutii and the other leaders converted in the presence of Metropolitan Filaret (Drozdov) in 1865, they listed the disputes in the Belaia Krinitza hierarchy as a fundamental motivation. The hierodeacon Filaret declared that the split had shown him ‘how much evil, falsity and ignorance is hidden in the schism.’²⁸ These were the most spectacular gains but certainly not the only ones. In distant Ural’sk, when two Belaia Krinitza priests converted to *Edinoverie* in 1870, both publicly derided the schism over the Circular Epistle: ‘upon personally seeing the disputes, strife and divisions between the *okruzhniki* and *protivookruzhniki*, the oaths of one against the other, the many lawless actions of the high ecclesiastical authorities, avarice and violations of conscience, I did not have any peace in my soul either day or night.’²⁹

One unforeseen consequence of the new schism was that Orthodox bishops may have felt that *Edinoverie* was in a more secure position and were less inclined towards substantial reforms. Metropolitan Filaret furnishes a ready example. In 1857, he had sounded out Metropolitan Grigorii (Postnikov) of St. Petersburg about the possibility of a *Edinoverie* bishop.³⁰ In the interpretation of one biographer, Filaret embarked on the course because the tolerant approach of Alexander II, combined with the undimmed strength of the schismatic hierarchy, made him fear for *Edinoverie*’s future. New measures were needed to increase its missionary potential. However, when the question of bishops arose again in

²⁷ *Sobranie mnenii*, 5:569.

²⁸ “Ob”iasnitel’nye zapiski, podannye mitropolitu Filaretu iskavshim prisoedineniia k pravoslavnoi tserkvi chlenami Belokrinitzskoi ierarkii v 1865 g.,” *Bratskoe Slovo*, no. 14 (1884): 228.

²⁹ V. N. Vitebskii, *Raskol’ v Ural’skom voiske i otnoshenie k nemu dukhovnoi i voennograzhdanskoi vlasti v kontse XVIII i v XIX v.* (Kazan, 1878), 227.

³⁰ *Sobranie mnenii*, 5:563.

1865, Filaret resolutely declaimed against it. The change in opinion was related to the weakness he now sensed in the schism. The quarrel over the epistle and the subsequent high profile conversions had strengthened the hand of the Church, thus negating the need for radical reform.³¹

The episode of the split in the Belaia Krinitza hierarchy illuminates to key points in regards to the Orthodox Church and *Edinoverie*. It firstly shows that the policies of the former towards the latter were always intimately connected with developments within Old Belief itself. Secondly, it demonstrates that the Church's attitude towards *Edinoverie* was always reactive rather than proactive. It largely depended on changes from outside rather than within the Church itself. This is one reason why reform of *Edinoverie* was often half-hearted. So long as the schism was kept weak either by the government or by self-imposed internal divisions, there was not urgent requirement to change *Edinoverie*'s position on the confessional boundaries between Orthodoxy and the schism. However, this meant that *Edinoverie* would always be unprepared for those moments when the schism did occupy a position of relative strength.

Internal Pressure

Two groups with pretensions to leading Russia's *edinovertsy* had arisen by the end of the 1860s. In St. Petersburg, there was Ioann Verkhovskii, the priest of the Milovskaia parish and son of the famous missionary Timofei. In Moscow, the recent convert Pavel Prusskii and his associate Nikolai Subbotin has also formed a camp around the Nikol'skii monastery and Subbotin's Brotherhood of St. Petr the Metropolitan. Both parties proposed reforms to *Edinoverie* but they were radically different to one another. Verkhovskii imagined nothing other than the abolition of Platon's *Edinoverie* and the full legitimisation of Old Belief. Subbotin and Pavel proposed reform of the 1800 settlement in a quest to integrate the *edinovertsy* more fully into the Orthodox confession. Whilst completely irreconcilable, the two schemes interacted with each other. Certainly, the threat posed by Verkhovskii motivated Subbotin to go further than perhaps he had initially intended. As he himself said, 'the need to review and correct these rules [of Platon] was all the more imperative as the schismatics used the rules as proof of the putative falsity of *Edinoverie*, that allegedly it did not stand real unity with the church and was despised by the Church itself. It was from here that Verkhovskii borrowed the main

³¹ V. Belikov, *Deiatel'nost' Moskovskogo mitropolita Filareta po otnosheniiu k raskolu* (Kazan, 1895), 504–506.

basis for his plan about the complete division of *Edinoverie* from the Church.³² The critique of the schismatics in Verkhovskii's hands gained new potency for disruption.

A Turbulent Priest

Verkhovskii, born in 1818, spent his formative years following the monastic career of his uncle, attending seminaries in Saratov, Perm' and Irkutsk when his relative was posted there.³³ He returned to St. Petersburg only in 1842 to become priest of the recently reopened Milovskaia parish. The tone of his works could not be more removed from that of his father. Fiery and embittered, he savaged the hypocrisy of the Platonic rules and mercilessly tore into the Synodal order of church government. He compared the power of the bishops to 'feudal despotism.'³⁴ He believed that reuniting Old Belief and Orthodoxy was a mission sent to him by God.³⁵ This rendered him almost impervious to threats of punishment and bestowed on him a severe martyrdom complex. In 1874, his parishioners overheard a rumour that the Metropolitan was so tired of him that he was about to send Verkhovskii to a rural parish.³⁶ Verkhovskii wrote a letter to Isidor (Nikol'skii) that verged on the hysterical. He told the Metropolitan that 'exile to the countryside will be a half measure and, as with all half measures, a mistaken one.'³⁷ He demanded to be either imprisoned or be allowed to be a good pastor to his spiritual children.³⁸

Verkhovskii's attitudes emerged not just from his character but also from his experience. As a *Edinoverie* priest, he had to live the contradictions of the rules of Platon and enforce their provisions on his flock. This had become most clear to him when he performed mixed marriages, particularly when one of the partners had to be converted to *Edinoverie* from Old Belief before the ceremony was conducted. He described this at length to Metropolitan Isidor in a letter from 30 January 1864 when he complained vociferously about the consistory asking him to which church Verkhovskii had joined an Old Believer: the Orthodox one or the *Edinoverie* one. The very distinction angered Verkhovskii. Surely, he stated, *Edinoverie* and Orthodoxy were one and the same and therefore it was

³² N. Subbotin, *Ko dniu pervogo godichnogo pominoveniia v Boze pochivshogo arkhimandrita Pavla* (Moscow, 1896), 246.

³³ R. A. Maiorov, "Edinoverie i lider ego soedinencheskogo napravleniia vtoroi poloviny XIX veka sviashchennik Ioann Verkhovskii" (Kand. diss., Moskovskii pedagogicheskii gosudarstvennyi universitet, 2008), 120.

³⁴ I. Verkhovskii, *Sochineniia Ioanna Verkhovskogo*, vol. 3 (Leipzig, 1886), 172.

³⁵ RGIA, f. 796, op. 206, d. 466, l. 14.

³⁶ Verkhovskii, *Sochineniia*, 3:27.

³⁷ Ibid., 3:31.

³⁸ Ibid.

entirely irrelevant to which of the two he had joined the Old Believer.³⁹ If this was not the view of the consistory, then it would seem to indicate that they believed *Edinoverie* was not Orthodox. The two were separate and different and as such *Edinoverie* was ‘pure government fiction.’⁴⁰ However, the consistory asked this question whilst maintaining the official line that *Edinoverie* and Orthodoxy were united in faith: ‘what logic! A *Edinoverie* priest does not have the right to marry two Orthodox people: this, according to the consistory, is direct proof that there is no essential difference between *Edinoverie* and Orthodoxy.’⁴¹ The provisions of Platon turned the priest into a ‘secret missionary’ and a ‘spy’ for the Orthodox Church among the *edinovertsy*, whose lack of privileges and rights demonstrated that they were a ‘non-Orthodox confession, tolerated only for a time.’⁴²

In 1864, Verkhovskii sent a petition to Alexander II on behalf of some his *Edinoverie* associates in the Urals. Over a hundred pages long, it is an immensely rich document based on a distinctive ecclesiology and original views on the value of ritual. For our present purposes, it is necessary to concentrate on his commentary on *Edinoverie*. He argued that from the beginning of the reign of Catherine the Great, the government had begun to tolerate the Old Believers and to search for ways to unite them with the Church. This was the spirit in which Paul ordered the Church to establish *Edinoverie*. However, he had not counted on the duplicity of the Orthodox hierarchy and particularly Metropolitan Platon.⁴³ When the Moscow Old Believers sent their petition to Platon, they had been making a plea for ‘true’ *Edinoverie*, a real unity of faith that would put an end to the schism. Platon, however, through his comments on the petition had transformed this into ‘false’ *Edinoverie*. His conditions and limitations had only created a hypocritical administrative measure that served to reinforce the very mistakes made in 1667. ‘Platonic *Edinoverie* is a sincere imitation of the Latin *unia*, only deprived of Latin Jesuit sophistry.’⁴⁴ The very term ‘*Edinoverie*’ was an outrage:

‘*Edinoverie*’, if it is Orthodoxy, should be called Orthodoxy and, if it is not Orthodoxy, then it should not be called *Edinoverie*: the name *Edinoverie* should be destroyed firstly because in general Orthodox society it carries a divisive meaning and secondly because it introduces error among the simple people. If the old ritual is Orthodox, then all the established dividing partitions between it and the official

³⁹ Ibid., 3:7.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid., 3:20.

⁴² Ibid., 3:21–22.

⁴³ Ibid., 3:155.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 3:157.

ritual should be overthrown and the old ritual should be blessed without any conditions, reservations and limitations for all and everyone, in all churches and parishes of the official Church. If the old ritual is not Orthodox, then it should be forbidden and forbidden even in *Edinoverie* churches, whose parishioners must either convert to the official church or return to the schism.⁴⁵

Platon's hope that the *Edinoverie* would eventually abandon their rituals was called a 'satanic delusion.'⁴⁶

Verkhovskii asked Alexander for sixteen reforms. The Old Believers were to be recognised as Orthodox and all state and church repression against them should cease. They should be allowed to have a full and open liturgical life. All Old Believer communities should have bishops who would be elected. Parishioners should choose their own priests. Since there was no reason to trust the Russian Orthodox episcopate, the new bishops would not be subordinated to the Synod and joint services would not be conducted until negotiations between the two episcopates had removed the anathemas of 1667. It was hoped that the Belaia Krinitsa hierarchy, on seeing the new Old Believer Church in Russia, would no longer be required to cling to their illegitimate hierarchy and would thus join the new Church. The petition ended with the hope that the priestless Old Believers could be shown, through gentleness and love, that the Church 'is their true mother.'⁴⁷

Later, opponents of Verkhovskii, such as Subbotin, claimed that his desire was to create an *Edinoverie* episcopate.⁴⁸ However, this was not Verkhovskii's intention. Ultimately, he did not want *Edinoverie* to exist at all. Verkhovskii's plan amounted to the formation of an Old Believer confession. *Edinoverie* itself would be ended and the *edinovertsy* joined to an episcopate that existed beyond the control of the Synod. For all intents and purposes, two Orthodox Churches and two confessions would exist in the Russian Empire, one defined by the three-fingered sign of the cross and the other by the usage of two digits.

The extreme content and tone of the petition won Verkhovskii few friends. Even his supporters in Ekaterinburg were astonished. One of them, the merchant G. M. Kazantsev, wrote to Verkhovskii a year later asking him whether he believed that the sacraments that

⁴⁵ Ibid., 3:150.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 3:151.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 3:166–170.

⁴⁸ N. Subbotin, *Otzyv ordinarnogo professora Moskovskoi dukhovnoi akademii Subbotina po povodu proshenii edinoveritsev sviatishemu sinodu o nuzhdakh edinoveriia*, [1878], 4.

he delivered in his parish church were of any value and then asked him why, if this was how he felt, he did not defect to the schism?⁴⁹ Kazantsev was also horrified at the way in which Metropolitan Platon was attacked. The Metropolitan may have made mistakes in the rules on *Edinoverie* but he was still the man who, in allowing old rituals, had restored priests and the sacraments to the Old Believers and for this he deserved veneration.⁵⁰ Nor was the opposition to Verkhovskii's ideas from normal *edinovertsy* isolated to this one incident. On 9 July 1878, Pavel Prusskii noted an incident when Verkhovskii gathered an assembly of Petersburg *edinovertsy* to try and gain support for the destruction of the anathemas. The Petersburg *edinovertsy* were suspicious and the majority left, leaving only seventeen people in the meeting.⁵¹

Verkhovskii's influence was limited by the extremity of his opinions and language. There was no likelihood whatsoever of the Church realising his plans, even when they emerged in a slightly more moderate form later on. However, he did have some impact. The sheer extent of Verkhovskii's radicalism forced Church leaders into action, if only to counteract the spread of his ideas.

The Professor and the Monk

Three years after the conversion of the Belaia Krinitza hierarchs, the Russian Church scored another major victory when Pavel (Lednev), the abbot of a skete in eastern Prussia, defected from the priestless Old Believers along with a number of his brothers and joined *Edinoverie*. Pavel (who was already universally known by his sobriquet, 'Prusskii') had achieved no small amount of fame among the Old Believers of Russia and his skills in running the monastery had done much to turn it from a distant outpost of priestless Old Belief into a hub of learning and Old Believer culture.⁵² During his lifetime, he conducted innumerable missionary expeditions to locations throughout the Russian Empire.⁵³ He also showed sufficient administrative acumen to be made abbot of the Nikol'skii monastery. Pavel spoke and wrote in a style comforting to his lowborn audiences, scattering his works with folk idioms and earthy language. His pamphlets were

⁴⁹ Verkhovskii, *Sochineniia*, 3:179.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 3:178.

⁵¹ Subbotin, *Ko dnu*, 278.

⁵² N. A. Kolosov, *Arkhimandrit Pavel (Prusskii)* (Moscow, 1895), 12.

⁵³ For one single example of Pavel's activities in the Don region, see *O merakh, prinimaemykh Donskim eparkhial'nym nachal'stvom k oslableniiu raskola v Donskoi oblasti, i tom vliianii, kakoe proizveli ma Donskikh raskol'nikov sobesedovaniia s nimi edinovercheskogo ieromonakha Pafnutiia i nastoiatelia Moskovskogo edinovercheskogo monastyria igumena Pavla* (Novocherkask, 1874).

popular and became essential tools for missionaries among the schismatics.⁵⁴ His personal charisma made him a necessary stage in the process of conversion for many.⁵⁵ He became the closest thing *Edinoverie* ever had to an elder (*starets*). Dostoevskii certainly thought of him this way since he used Pavel as the model for some of saintly monks in his works.⁵⁶

However, Pavel lacked the intellectual polish required to theorise a new approach to *Edinoverie*. For this he needed Nikolai Subbotin. The scion of a clerical family, Subbotin had started teaching courses on the schism in the Moscow Ecclesiastical Academy in 1855. Four years later, he was made a professor, a position he held until his death in 1905. In the course of his career, he was tremendously productive, writing innumerable books and essays on Old Belief. He also took an active role in missionary matters, founding the anti-schismatic Brotherhood of St. Petr the Metropolitan and providing it with a journal, *Bratskoe slovo*, in 1875.⁵⁷ His relationship with Pavel was principally as a publisher and editor. The abbot was also the personification of Subbotin's ideas about *Edinoverie*, their living manifestation.

Like Verkhovskii, Subbotin's theorising about the contradictions of the rules of Platon began to manifest when he was personally confronted with their results. In 1868 Apollos (Beliaev), the Bishop of Viatka, visited a *Edinoverie* church in his diocese. An Orthodox believer in the crowd asked the bishop whether he could convert to *Edinoverie* since he preferred the old rituals. The bishop answered no: '*Edinoverie* is only a step to Orthodoxy.'⁵⁸ This remark, taking up no more than a line in the official section of the diocesan paper, was rapidly reprinted and Subbotin was provoked into responding. He pointed out that such statements could be damaging since they gave the impression that

⁵⁴ For the full works, see Pavel (Lednev), *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii nikol'skogo edinovercheskogo monastyria nastoiatelia arhimandrita Pavla*, 4 vols. (Moscow, 1897).

⁵⁵ Visiting Pavel in Moscow or speaking to him while he was on a mission became a common trope in conversion narratives. For example, see I. Nevestin, "Raskol' v sele Poime i uchrezhdenie edinoveriia," *Penzskie eparkhial'nye vedomosti*, no. 10 (1868): 330; "Prisoedinenie k edinoveriiu," *Iaroslavskie eparkhial'nye vedomosti*, no. 35 (1870): 296; S. Spisglazov, *Moe obrashchenie iz raskola v pravoslavie. (Kratkoe zhizneopisanie obrativshchagosia iz raskola, nyne edinovercheskogo sviashchennika Savvy Spiglazova)* (Novocherkassk, 1886), 15; T. I. Kasilov, "Ispoved byvshogo edinovertsa," *Tserkov'*, no. 30 (1908): 1036.

⁵⁶ N. F. Budanova, "Pavel Prusskii i ego kniga 'Beseda o prishestvii prorokov Ilii i Enokha ob Antikhriste i sedminakh Daniilovykh'." (Novye materialy k teme 'Dostoevskii i staroobriadchestvo'), in *Dostoevskii: materialy i issledovaniia*, vol. 18 (St. Petersburg, 2007), 88–89.

⁵⁷ For biographical details, see I. M. Gromoglasov, "N. I. Subbotin (30 maia 1905)," *Bogoslovskii vestnik* 2, no. 7–8 (1905): 678–84 and E. Krevsky, "Defining the Schism: Images and Interpretations of the Old Belief in Late Nineteenth-Century Russian Discourse" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Alberta, 2002), 234–255.

⁵⁸ I. A., "Obozrenie Viatskoi eparkhii," *Viatskie eparkhial'nye vedomosti*, no. 18 (1867): 549.

Edinoverie was something less than fully Orthodox. Whilst Subbotin's comment was moderate, it infuriated Apollos. He officially complained to D. A. Tolstoi, the ober-procurator, that Subbotin had not only insulted him but had also offended the entire Orthodox episcopate and thus demanded disciplinary charges be brought against the erstwhile professor.⁵⁹ The editor of the diocesan paper claimed that it was he and not the bishop who had included the inflammatory remark. He also stood by it fully: 'it is impossible to represent *Edinoverie* as anything other than as a type of step to Orthodoxy. It lacks true ecumenical Orthodoxy. Between *Edinoverie* and Orthodoxy, there is no complete similarity in the confession of the Christian truths. On the contrary there are differences that are clear and obvious for all and they are recognised by law in the rules of Metropolitan Platon.'⁶⁰

Subbotin was mortified by the implications of such an argument. If this was the case, he stated, then what did this mean for the Russian Orthodox Church? How could it have allowed something that was not truly Orthodox be practised under its aegis? It could mean only that the Church was itself sinning.⁶¹ Subbotin's remedy for the case was to turn to the rules of Metropolitan Platon, 'the chief and almost only legal basis for their correct resolution.'⁶² Apollos, rather than telling the potential convert that *Edinoverie* was something less than Orthodox, should have turned to the rule of Platon that forbade conversion from Orthodoxy to *Edinoverie*. Whilst *Edinoverie* was one with Orthodoxy, the rituals it used were not 'as perfect' as those of the latter and therefore conversion to it was neither 'necessary or desirable.'⁶³ Indeed, Subbotin went further than this: 'on the contrary, conversion from *Edinoverie* to Orthodoxy, from rituals that are not fully correct and ancient to rituals that are truly ancient and correct, is necessary and desirable.'⁶⁴

This was an early stage in Subbotin's thought. He evidently believed in the viability of ritual assimilation and in the ability of the 1800 settlement to manage the questions of *Edinoverie*. He had not yet drawn the conclusion that it was precisely the rules of Platon that generated the kind of statements made by Apollos and the editor. At this point, he

⁵⁹ Subbotin, *Ko dniu*, 44–45.

⁶⁰ "Ob otnoshenii edinoveriia k pravoslaviiu," *Viatskie eparkhial'nye vedomosti*, no. 6 (1870): 100.

⁶¹ N. Subbotin, *Neskol'ko slov o edinoverii v otvete na vozrazheniia iz Viatki* (Moscow, 1869), 19–20.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 22.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 28–29.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 28.

limited himself to fighting against the notion that *Edinoverie* was not Orthodox, an extreme opinion even from a member of the episcopate.⁶⁵

The case was different in 1878 when Subbotin was called in by the Synod to give his opinion of several *Edinoverie* petitions that had arrived a year earlier. The decade of acquaintance with Pavel and polemical jousting with Verkhovskii had left their imprint. His report to the Synod shows this clearly. He directed all his ire at Verkhovskii, whose desires he characterised as ‘ultra-schismatic’ and ‘completely unlawful and decisively harmful for the Church.’⁶⁶ He then detailed his understanding of *Edinoverie*. The correct interpretation was that *Edinoverie* was united with the Church, that it was one part of the same flock. Ritual was the only distinction between them and the rest of the Church. This interpretation was epitomised in the person of Pavel Prusskii.⁶⁷ The false interpretation, held by Verkhovskii, moved towards the separation of the *edinovertsy* from the Church, a movement that was characterised most strongly in the desire for independent *Edinoverie* bishops.⁶⁸ It was his opinion that the *Edinoverie* petitioners were within the spirit of true *Edinoverie*. Their desire for change was motivated by a yearning to demonstrate their unity with the Orthodox Church. Therefore, Subbotin wanted the rules of Platon to be rewritten to better reflect this unity.⁶⁹ The most important changes he suggested were that Orthodox could convert to *Edinoverie* on the proviso that there was no opposition from their spiritual leaders and that the *Edinoverie* clergy be allowed to give the sacraments to Orthodox believers so long as it was understood that doing so did not turn them into *edinovertsy*. Subbotin’s new settlement eradicated the fifth and eleventh rules of Platon, those most responsible for perpetuating a sense of confessional difference.

The difference between his views in 1869 and in 1878 is stark. Subbotin had now come to the conclusion that the 1800 settlement had to be replaced. His proposed reforms could completely end the confessional boundaries that separated the Orthodox from the *edinovertsy* and bring them together within a single confession. Inherent here was a recognition of some freedom in ritual matters. Orthodox believers could, if they so desired, join *Edinoverie* and use the pre-Nikonian rituals. Therefore confessional integration did not mean ritual uniformity. Two kinds of rituals could co-exist within the

⁶⁵ It certainly contradicted the authoritative view issued by Metropolitan Grigorii in 1857 where it was asserted that *edinovertsy* did believe in the same Ecumenical Church as the Orthodox. Grigorii (Postnikov), *Ovet edinovertsa staroobriadtsy na ego vozrazheniia* (St Petersburg, 1857), 10-11.

⁶⁶ Subbotin, *Otzyv* 5-6.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 4.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 6.

Orthodox Church without threatening either unity or the security of the confession. Subbotin's review was therefore an outline of confessional integration and its goal to end the Platonic contradictions by coming down firmly on the side of ritual tolerance, the importance of conscience in liturgical behaviour and the inclusion of the *edinovertsy* within an Orthodox confession rather than quarantine outside it. He understood better than most that the only clear way to end Platon's paradoxes was by ending the 1800 settlement and starting again.

Petitions

In 1877-78, two petitions arose among the *edinovertsy*. The first originated from Nizhnii Novgorod: the local *edinovertsy* assembled a conference to discuss the needs of their movement, also inviting co-religionists from other parts of Russia to participate. The second petition arose in Moscow almost simultaneously. The Nizhnii Novgorod petition was notable for the range of its requests. They asked that the Orthodox be allowed to attend *Edinoverie* schools and to allow marriages between *edinovertsy* and the Orthodox to be conducted in either church.⁷⁰ As we will see in chapter V, these requests arose out of the problems that the Nizhnii Novgorod *edinovertsy* were having with their local diocesan administration and point to the extent that bishops and consistories were attempting to separate Orthodox and *edinovertsy* in the parishes. However, the problems were not isolated to Nizhnii Novgorod, as is shown by an 1878 Tomsk petition complaining about the Orthodox wives of *Edinoverie* men being forbidden from attending old rite liturgies.⁷¹

The Moscow petition meanwhile attempted to define what *Edinoverie* actually was. 'What, in reality, does the *Edinoverie* church mean?' was the central question.⁷² Their answer was straightforward. *Edinoverie* was 'the one and the same Orthodox Church, consisting of nothing more and nothing less than a parish of the Orthodox Church.'⁷³ The *edinovertsy* received priests from the Orthodox bishops and they were also under the same episcopal jurisdictions as the Orthodox. This led them to their central claim. If the Orthodox and the *edinovertsy* were indeed one and the same, then this meant that the differences imposed by the rules of Platon were largely unjustified and needed either

⁷⁰ "Vazhnoe sobytie v edinovercheskom obshchestve," *Tserkovno-obshchestvennyi vestnik* no. 127 (1877): 1.

⁷¹ D. N. Belikov, *Tomskii raskol: (istoricheskii ocherk s 1834 po 1880-ye gody)* (Tomsk, 1901), 210–211.

⁷² RGIA, f. 796, op. 145, d. 2257, l. 28ob.

⁷³ Ibid.

modification or outright abolition. They argued that they saw in the rules of Platon ‘a sign of incomplete recognition of their unity and communion with the Orthodox Church.’⁷⁴

Both petitions made several requests about changes to the rules of Platon. The Muscovites asked that those people who were registered in the metrical books as Orthodox but were in reality be Old Believers should be allowed to convert to *Edinoverie* if they had not attended the Church for confession in five years.⁷⁵ Whilst they recognised that this rule had been sagacious to begin with, there was now no threat that the *edinovertsy* would attempt to convert the Orthodox since they had proven that they considered themselves to undoubtedly and sincerely belong to the Orthodox Church. In contrast, the Nizhnii Novgorod group asked for the fifth rule’s complete abolition.⁷⁶ The Moscow *edinovertsy* also called for a change to point eleven, which only allowed the Orthodox to turn to *Edinoverie* priests for the sacraments when in ‘deathly need.’ The *edinovertsy* pointed out that this caused them concern because it seemed to indicate that the sacraments dispensed by their clergy did not possess the same force as those of the Orthodox priesthood.⁷⁷

By 1880, the words and actions of Verkhovskii, Subbotin and the *Edinoverie* petitioners demonstrated that there was a groundswell of support for changes to be made to the rules of Platon. This set the stage for the Synodal reforms that were to be enacted between 1881 and 1886.

The Needs of *Edinoverie*

The 1800 Settlement

Even before the beginning of the 1860s, doubts were being raised as to whether the rules of Platon were fit for purpose. In 1858, a peculiar new type of union was formed in Ural’sk. The Cossack converts stated their desire to have priests ordained by the Orthodox Church but outright rejected both the rules of Platon and Synodal control, requesting instead that their new church be managed through the ataman’s chancellery.⁷⁸ The ataman, A. D. Stolypin, was no doubt concerned about maintaining the loyalty of his men in a problematic border region and so acquiesced to their request. He was also able to obtain the support of the local bishop and the permission of the Synod, although the

⁷⁴ Ibid., I. 29.

⁷⁵ Ibid., I. 28.

⁷⁶ “Vazhnoe sobytie,” 1–2.

⁷⁷ RGIA, f. 796, op. 145, d. 2257, I. 28–29ob.

⁷⁸ Vitebskii, *Raskol’ v Ural’skom voiske*, 137–138.

ober-procurator stressed that this was the first time such an arrangement had been allowed.⁷⁹ The new arrangement constituted two parishes and came to be known locally as the ‘blessed churches.’⁸⁰ Whilst the Ural’sk arrangement is exceptional, the case does show that the rules of Platon and the very name *Edinoverie* could repel Old Believers as much as they could attract them.

There is some evidence that the Synod was becoming more lenient in enforcing the prohibition against Orthodox conversion to *Edinoverie*. On 18 December 1864, a case came before the Synod of two peasants from Novgorod who had ‘tempted’ over a thousand Orthodox peasants to *Edinoverie* and were subsequently prosecuted under the criminal law code. The Synod ordered that the sentence be removed. They found that ‘exciting deviation to *Edinoverie* cannot be fully comparable with tempting to foreign confessions because the *edinovertsy* are in unity with the Orthodox and are dependent on the Orthodox priesthood.’⁸¹ Future cases were therefore to be reviewed both the civil and ecclesiastical administration, with the rules of Platon serving as the legal basis. The Synod was at least attempting to prevent conversion from Orthodoxy to *Edinoverie* being treated as a criminal matter.

When it came to considering the request of the *Edinoverie* petitions in 1878, the advice from Russia’s most senior anti-schismatic theologians was mixed. The reformist stance of Subbotin was joined by Professor Nikolai Ivanovskii of the Kazan’ Ecclesiastical Academy who believed the petitioners were motivated ‘by a real desire to strengthen *Edinoverie* at the expense of the schism.’⁸² However, the other two reviews by Professors A. M. Voskresenskii and I. F. Nil’skii adamantly rejected the need for change. The latter argued that

to allow to the Orthodox free conversion to *Edinoverie* would mean to recognise that the rituals of *Edinoverie*, and consequently those of the schism, are as correct as the Orthodox rituals, that the corrections of the books conducted by Patriarch Nikon were at the very least superfluous and finally that all the subsequent actions of the Orthodox Church directed against the schism and to the establishment of the rituals of Orthodoxy were incorrect and unlawful. The Church cannot resolve to take such a step, not only because it would be

⁷⁹ Ibid., 140.

⁸⁰ For a full description of the liturgical life of the “blessed churches” and their relationship with the Orthodox and *edinovertsy*, see *ibid.*, 141–148.

⁸¹ *Obzor*, 334–335.

⁸² N. I. Ivanovskii, *Otzyv ekstraordinarnogo professora Kazanskoi dukhovnoi akademii Ivanovskogo, po povodu proshenii edinovertsev sviateishemu sinodu o nuzhdakh edinoveriia*, [1878], 2.

unjustified [...] but especially because it would inevitably serve as temptation for the Orthodox and a victory for the schism. The Orthodox, seeing that the Church relates indifferently to rituals, both theirs and the *Edinoverie* ones, and consequently schismatic ones, will be confused as to where there is truth and where there is error. To what conclusions such misunderstandings can lead is not difficult to understand. A new schism among the Orthodox themselves could appear, independent of the existing schism.⁸³

Voskresenskii also refused to countenance any change to the rules. He believed that the intentions behind the request were suspect. The *edinovertsy* only desired to increase their numbers and thus gain more leverage for more radical reforms, such as obtaining a *Edinoverie* bishop.⁸⁴ Ultimately he concluded that the desire of the *edinovertsy* was to establish a church within a church.⁸⁵ In terms of the relation of the two groups, *Edinoverie* was absolutely inferior: '*Edinoverie* relates to the Orthodox Church in the same way that a picture, painted by a simple painter with mistakes in the details, relates to a picture depicting the same subject but painted with an artistically skilled hand.'⁸⁶

Thus, there was an equal split between the most outstanding academic representatives of the anti-schismatic movement. Subbotin and Ivanovskii had concluded that Orthodoxy and *Edinoverie* constituted the same confession and thus backed the abolition or modification of the rules of Platon. For them, Orthodoxy was not defined by the Nikonian rites but by its ability to contain two sets of rituals. Nil'skii and Voskresenskii however delineated the Orthodox confession by the reformed rituals. *Edinoverie* stood decisively outside Orthodoxy because it did not use these rites. To integrate it into the confession by any other way than ritual assimilation would expose the entire Orthodox flock to temptation and void the basis of the Church's struggle with Old Belief. Both sets of views represent the quandary in which the Synod found itself. Further reform exposed the Orthodox to schismatic infection and destroyed the role of ritual as a marker of confessional identity. Failure to reform might push both the *edinovertsy* and those Orthodox who preferred the old rite towards Old Belief. It might also drive people to Verkhovskii.

⁸³ I. F. Nil'skii, *Otzyv ordinarnogo professora S.-Peterburgskoi dukhovnoi akademii Nil'skogo po povodu proshenii edinovertsev sviateishemu sinodu o nuzhdakh edinoveriia*, [1878], 15.

⁸⁴ A. M. Voskresenskii, *Otzyv ekstraordinarnogo professora Kievskoi dukhovnoi akademii protoiereia Voskresenskogo po povodu proshenii edinovertsev sviateishemu sinodu o nuzhdakh edinoveriia*, [1878], 11.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 23.

With Pobedonostsev's accession to the position of ober-procurator and the anticipated passage of the 1883 edict, the Synod was pressured into acting. In 1881, the Synod published a verdict wherein it made some changes to the rules of 1800. They explained their basic definition of *Edinoverie* as those 'who confessed the same truly ecumenical faith but who used the old books that, whilst not being prohibited by the Orthodox Church, did contain some sinfulness.'⁸⁷ Changes could be allowed to the rules of *Edinoverie* but only because doing so meant 'the elimination of great temptation and misunderstanding and only in the sense of greater easing [the process of conversion] to renegades who persevere to return to the bosom of the Church by the path of *Edinoverie*.'⁸⁸ Firstly, it was ruled that children of mixed marriages could be baptised by either ritual. Secondly, secret Old Believers could convert to *Edinoverie* from Orthodoxy once a five-year period had elapsed since their last confession. Finally, the Orthodox were allowed to take the sacraments from *Edinoverie* priests so long as their parish priest agreed to it and that it was understood that these people were still Orthodox and not *edinovertsy*.⁸⁹ Permitting the Orthodox to go to *Edinoverie* priests for the sacraments essentially abolished rule eleven.

The Synod's definition of *Edinoverie* suggests that the Orthodox confession had been widened. There was now to be no question that the *edinovertsy* 'confessed' the same faith as the Orthodox and that rituals were not an obstacle to that unity. It also gave a sense of equality and legitimacy to the old rituals. They were good enough for Orthodox as well as *edinovertsy* and thus confirmed the logical outcome of the ritual re-evaluation that rite was relatively unimportant. The provision that children of mixed marriages could be baptised by either ritual conveyed the same point. Even though the Synod defined the old rituals as containing some sinfulness, this sin was evidently no bar to the two rituals being *de facto* equal. However, they had not backed Subbotin's idea to completely replace the rules. The fifth rule was moderated but remained a stumbling block to fostering unity between *Edinoverie* and Orthodoxy. Equally, the commitment to ritual assimilation remained in force, even if the reform theoretically undermined it.

Freedom of Ritual

At the heart of the discussions over the Platonic settlement, there was a conflict about rituals and their value. Could Orthodoxy allow more than one set of rituals to be considered Orthodox? If so, how was the Synod to define the liturgical contours of the

⁸⁷ RGIA, f. 796, op. 145, d. 2257, l. 121.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid., l. 110-113.

confession? The questions were about whether the re-evaluation of ritual could be realised in reality as well as in theory and what such a realisation would mean for Russian Orthodoxy.

The central problem around which all of this revolved were the seventeenth century anathemas, which had proclaimed that the usage of two fingers or other pre-Nikonian rites to be nothing other than heresy. Churchmen from Platon onwards had striven to reinterpret these proscriptions in the light of the ritual re-evaluation by suggesting that the anathemas fell on individuals using the rituals as ‘a symbol of opposition of Old Believers to Church authority.’⁹⁰ So, if a person used the old rituals whilst conceding the legitimacy of Nikonian Orthodoxy, the anathemas did not apply. The internal state of a believer changed the meaning of rites themselves: ‘it is already clear for *those that have eyes to see* that the rituals of the schism and the rituals of *Edinoverie* are *not one and the same* according to their internal meaning and consequently *according to their essence*, although they look *similar externally*.’⁹¹ The view of the Church on the anathemas embodied the way in which the ritual re-evaluation privileged the beliefs of a person over the way in which they displayed them to the rest of the world. However, such a re-interpretation was a highly contentious reading of the anathemas and ignored the laws and polemics released before 1764 that conflated ritual behaviour with dogmatic purity. All of this might make theologically literate *edinovertsy* uneasy about the legitimacy of their churches and provided Old Believer polemicists a stick with which to beat *Edinoverie*.

In 1864, Verkhovskii vented his full fury at the anathemas, condemning them for having imposed ‘ritual exclusivity’ and foreign Greek rites on the Church.⁹² In response, the Synod decided to sound out the Russian embassy in Constantinople about applying to the Ecumenical Patriarch to obtain a full explanation that the anathemas of 1667 did not fall on the rituals, only on persons.⁹³ The consent of the Patriarchs was important to the *edinovertsy* and the Old Believers for two principal reasons. The first was a concern that the Russian Synod had no right to reinterpret the rules of the Council of 1667, a council that had been attended by an unprecedented number of eastern prelates. As Verkhovskii commented, whilst technically the Great Moscow Council was only a local and not an

⁹⁰ I. F. Nil'skii, “Rech po povodu rassuzhdenii o nuzhdakh edinovertsev, skazannaia 25 fevr. 1873 g. v zasedanii sankt-peterburgskogo otdela obshchestva liubitelei dukhovnogo prosveshcheniia,” *Khristianskoe chtenie*, no. 6 (1873): 285–286.

⁹¹ *Neskol'ko slov dlia ob'iasneniia nedorazumenii otnositel'no edinoveriia i raskola* (Moscow, 1867), 4–5.

⁹² Verkhovskii, *Sochineniia*, 3:136.

⁹³ RGIA, f.796, op. 145, d. 2257, l. 2-4.

ecumenical council, it had subsequently been treated as such because of the participation of so many of the Patriarchs and their representatives.⁹⁴ The Synod and church writers staunchly defended their right to issue an indulgence without the permission of the other eastern churches. One anonymous pamphleteer in 1867 noted that each local church had the right to define its own ritual and did not need to turn to the rest of the Ecumenical Church to gain their approval.⁹⁵ Just over a decade later, Voskresenskii said exactly the same in response to another request for a patriarchal explanation: ‘the Holy Synod itself has the right to allow the usage of the old rituals as it did upon the establishment of *Edinoverie* and as it does on the opening of individual *Edinoverie* churches since they were not anathematised.’⁹⁶

The answer from the embassy was negative. The ambassador stated that the timing was not fortuitous and, moreover, he was uncertain whether the Patriarchs of the East had even the remotest conception of what *Edinoverie* was. This might run the risk of the Patriarchs telling the Synod that their indulgence to the *edinovertsy* was incorrectly established. Consequently a discussion of the issue could cause ‘innumerable future complications in relations between our Holy Synod and the Patriarchal cathedras.’⁹⁷ Filaret and the Synod accepted the ambassador’s advice and did not further pursue the matter.⁹⁸ This was the last time that the Synod actively sought such an explanation for the anathemas from the Eastern Churches. The affair does reveal an ecumenical dimension to the problem of *Edinoverie* that was intimately woven with the Russian Church’s authority to define matters of ritual. It begged a deeper question about autocephaly itself. Where did the national Church’s authority end and the Ecumenical Church’s begin? Autocephaly led to many questioning the extent of the Church’s authority to decide on ritual and thus define the confession.

As arcane as the questions surrounding the anathemas were, they captured the interest of the general public in 1873-4 when a long discussion was held in the Society for the Admirers’ of Religious Enlightenment in St. Petersburg. While many speakers contributed, the main debate was between I. F. Nil’skii and Tertii Filippov, a state bureaucrat and amateur theologian. On 18 January 1873, Filippov made a long speech entitled ‘The Needs of *Edinoverie*.’ However, he defined these needs rather narrowly.

⁹⁴ Verkhovskii, *Sochineniia*, 3:189.

⁹⁵ *Neskol’ko slov*, 16.

⁹⁶ Voskresenskii, *Otzyv*, 16.

⁹⁷ RGIA, f.796, op. 145, d. 2257, l. 8ob.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, l. 11ob.

The principal need of the *edinovertsy*, he argued, was the abolition of the anathemas of 1667 that had been placed on the old rituals. Turning back to the history of the ancient Church, Filippov traced the occasions on which ritual difference had emerged within the Christian Church and how these situations had been resolved. He found that, on each occasion, the Church had not broken off communion with those who used different rites but had instead valued church unity above ritual uniformity. The ancient Church had consistently enthroned, in both practice and principle, the idea of ‘freedom of ritual.’⁹⁹ In placing the anathemas on the rituals of the Old Believers, the Russian Church had violated the long standing and canonically justified principle of freedom of ritual. In the creation of *Edinoverie* in 1800, the Church had proposed a new interpretation of these anathemas in order to escape the necessity of removing them.

Filippov found this novel interpretation to be specious.¹⁰⁰ He cited a great deal of evidence that suggested that Platon’s interpretation of the anathemas had never been the one held by either the Council or by every other Russian prelate addressing the issue before the 1760s. The ritual re-evaluation was no older than that.¹⁰¹ Therefore, the anathemas had to be abolished, for which a new ecumenical council had to be called.¹⁰²

For his part, Nil’skii firstly argued that freedom of ritual in the ancient Church was by no means as widespread or as definitive as his opponent claimed:

I must say that, in my view, the Church cannot indifferently relate to the question about rituals. True, rituals are not dogmas of faith, they are not the foundational principles of morality; only those are unchanging, holy and saving. The Church knows this very well – it knows what meaning rituals have in the matter of faith and salvation. But if the Church has the right and the obligation to concern itself that the thoughts of believers are correct, then no-one can refuse it the right to be concerned about the fact that the expression of these thoughts should [also] be true and correct.¹⁰³

So while the Church did not equate dogma and ritual, it also did not believe every ritual was of equal value. This was the reason why Platon and subsequent bishops had made it clear that the ritual of *Edinoverie* was had some ‘sinfulness’ in comparison to the Orthodox ritual and this was the reason why Platon had wanted to see the eventual

⁹⁹ T. Filippov, *Sovremennye tserkovnye voprosy* (St Petersburg, 1882), 273.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 281.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 294.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 302–303.

¹⁰³ Nil’skii, “Rech,” 271.

assimilation of the *edinovertsy* to the Nikonian rite. Turning to the anathemas of 1667, Nil'skii went about justifying the Platonic interpretation that they related not to the rituals but to the intentions of the people using them. All of this demonstrated that the Church had always held that the anathemas did not apply to rituals and therefore Platon's indulgence was entirely in keeping with the correct thinking on the matter.¹⁰⁴ As such, the anathemas did not need to be removed but only explained.¹⁰⁵

The debate between Filippov and Nil'skii illustrates how far the ritual re-evaluation had become engrained in the minds of theologians. Both men asserted that dogma and rite were not the same and that the internal intentions of believers were paramount to defining the worth of a ritual. The difference lay in how the two depicted the history of the re-evaluation. For Filippov, the 1667 council marked a disjuncture with earlier church history, the moment when dogma and rites were wrongly conflated. That mistake had to be removed by destroying the anathemas. Nil'skii believed that there had been no break at the Great Moscow Council and thus there was no need to remove the anathemas. The other major distinction was the extent to which they had realised the full consequences of the ritual re-evaluation. Nil'skii evidently believed that there was still some connection between ritual acts and internal belief, hence his statement that the Church had to intervene in ritual matters. Filippov regarded ritual as a pure externality and thus stood for full freedom, hence his belief that Anglicans and Old Catholics could become Orthodox whilst still maintaining their liturgical traditions.¹⁰⁶

The reading of the ritual re-evaluation into the history of the Church marks a shift in the way the Orthodox confession was conceived. It was part of the transformation of ritual tolerance into a marker of ascribed Orthodox identity. This was a predictable consequence of the creation of *Edinoverie*. By allowing two rites within the Orthodox confession, the Nikonian rituals had begun to lose their power as ways of delineating Orthodoxy from the schism. This was especially the case in the 1870s and 1880s when the Church was slowly moving towards recognising the essential equality of both rites. Thus it is from this period when we have the first statements defining Orthodoxy as ritually tolerant whilst defining the schism as ritually exclusive. Take this comment from a journalist writing in 1883:

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 285–286.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 312.

¹⁰⁶ Filippov, *Sovremennye tserkovnye voprosy*, 277.

Their [the Old Believers'] point of view on the old rituals is essentially distinct from the views of the Orthodox on the same subject. The latter do not look on rituals as something that is unchangeable. If the Orthodox saw any sinfulness in their books or any similar kind of insufficiency in the ritual side of the liturgy, then the mistakes could be corrected. Therefore the Orthodox are alien to intolerance of other opinions and relate indulgently to the mistakes and errors of others in that which relates to the ritual side of the liturgy. Not so among the followers of the ancient piety.¹⁰⁷

Timofei Verkhovskii expressed similar sentiments, suggesting that Old Belief was defined by an unreasonable adherence to the old rites that had led 'to the confusion of ritual with dogma, ritualism with faith. Old Believers have come to the conviction [...] that Catholic Orthodoxy requires compulsory uniformity of ritual to the smallest detail for all.'¹⁰⁸ The corollary of his argument was the Orthodox did not do this, or at least should not do so. Pavel Prusskii did much the same in his missionary lectures. In one, he stressed the historical justifications for the ritual re-evaluation whilst stipulating that the biggest mistake of the Old Believers was the failure to accept the difference between ritual and dogma.¹⁰⁹ The ability to make the distinction between the two categories was part of what it meant to be Orthodox.

The idea of the ritual re-evaluation being the major dividing line between Orthodoxy and the schism was still in its early stages, as one would expect when debates were still raging as to whether the old rites were equal in value to the new. Indeed, so contentious was the idea of equality of ritual in the 1870s that one author claimed that if the *edinovertsy* won it, they would 'attempt to bring about a revolution in the Church, leading to the full victory of *Edinoverie* over Orthodoxy.'¹¹⁰ Nevertheless, when that debate was resolved in favour of *de facto* and then *de jure* ritual equality, the shift to defining Orthodoxy through ritual tolerance was decisive. As we will see in 1918, the definition of Orthodoxy as ritually tolerant was to play a pivotal role in the discussions.

The ultimate product of the debates was that the Synod issued an explanation of the anathemas in its edict of 1881, once more proclaiming that they fell on individuals in

¹⁰⁷ "Po delam edinoveriia," *Tserkovno-obshchestvennyi vestnik*, no. 113 (1881): 1.

¹⁰⁸ T. Verkhovskii, *Starodub'e. Zapiski prot. S.-Peterb. nikol'sk. edinoverchesk. tserkvi T. A. Verkhovskogo, vysochaishe komandirovannogo v 1845-1848 g. gosudarem imp. Nikolaem Pavlovichem dlia ustroistva edinoveriia v Chernigovsk. staroobriadchesk. posadakh.* (Kazan', 1874), III, 89.

¹⁰⁹ (Lednev), *Polnoe sobranie*, 1:528-544.

¹¹⁰ "Pritiazaniia edinoveritsev," *Tserkovno-obshchestvennyi vestnik*, no. 129 (1878): 1.

opposition to the Church rather than rites.¹¹¹ Given that the entire history of the Church had been rewritten to argue that it had never treated rituals as dogmas, no other result could be expected. The gradual transformation of the ritual re-evaluation into the marker of Orthodox identity required it to be written into the past. Once this started to be accomplished, the Church could not easily admit that it had broken with that tradition, hence the removal of the anathemas therefore became difficult. This reading of the anathemas was an ‘invented tradition,’ designed to retrospectively justify the foundation of *Edinoverie* and the ritual re-evaluation.

The End of Insults

The sixteenth rule of Platon strictly forbade the Orthodox and *edinovertsy* insulting each other’s rituals. This was prudent, since publicly denigrating the rituals of the *edinovertsy* could cause extreme reactions, as the following example shows. After his conversion from the Belaia Krinitsa hierarchy, Pafnutii (Ovchinnikov) had been allowed to hold weekly lectures in the Kremlin from the steps of the Ivan the Great bell tower.¹¹² At the same time, Ivan Vinogradov, a Moscow priest, published a new book on the antiquity of the three-fingered sign of the cross and the novelty of the two fingers.¹¹³ While there was nothing particularly unusual about this kind of work, its language and questionable assertions made it particularly offensive to the Old Believers and the *edinovertsy*.

So, on 11 September 1866, when Pafnutii climbed the steps of the bell tower, he did so with the express purpose of launching an attack on the new book and its author. Indignation among the Old Believers and the *edinovertsy* followed. Count P. A. Shuvalov, the head of Russia’s gendarmerie, described it as a ‘storm’ that had filled the Kremlin square with insults. He demanded an explanation from D. A. Tolstoi, the ober-procurator, as to why Filaret (Drozdov) permitted this monk to speak.¹¹⁴ The above incident proves that Platon’s sixteenth rule was justified. It really was necessary to prevent both *edinovertsy* and Orthodox from throwing insults at each other’s rituals. It is

¹¹¹ RGIA, f, 796, op. 145, d. 2257, l. 122.

¹¹² See a collection of these talks in Pafnutii (Ovchinnikov), *Zapiski po narodnym besedam ieromonakha Pafnutiia*, 3 vols. (Moscow, 1877).

¹¹³ I. Vinogradov, *O fedoritovom slove* (Moscow, 1866).

¹¹⁴ *Sobranie mnenii*, 5:912.

no small wonder that the *Edinoverie* petitions of the 1870s frequently required the Synod to confirm this rule and ensure its strict observance.¹¹⁵

However, the Church continued to reprint the essays of eighteenth century anti-schismatic polemicists like St. Dimitrii of Rostov who directly called the two fingered sign of the cross a monophysite heresy. Equally, these comments had been incorporated into the introductions of the Hours and Psalter of the Orthodox Church. Consequently, there was a contradiction between the rules and Church policies, which Old Believers pointed to as a sign of hypocrisy. In 1858, in response to a request from a *Edinoverie* priest in Ural'sk, Metropolitan Filaret suggested to the Synod that they no longer printed Psalters with the detested phrases and that such should be removed from the works of St. Dimitrii.¹¹⁶ Nothing was done. Under pressure from Subbotin and Dmitrii Tolstoi in 1865, Filaret again told the Synod 'it must not remain inactive and leave affairs in such an inauspicious position.'¹¹⁷ This time he proposed that the most offensive parts of the Psalter and Hours be corrected and offered his own versions, with alterations suggested by Pafnutii.¹¹⁸ In 1886, the Synod gave a further commitment to exclude the objectionable sections from the liturgical books and also declared that the views of the earlier polemicists were those of private individuals writing in a different time: they were not the official view of the Church.¹¹⁹

The fact that it took until 1886 to make rather basic concessions to the ritual sensibilities of the *edinovertsy* is a demonstration of how long the logical consequences of the ritual re-evaluation took to sink in. The Church, intentionally or not, was still broadcasting that the old rites were heretical by 1865. Consequently, generations of Orthodox parishioners, clergy and bishops were being raised on the idea that the two-fingered sign of the cross was a dire heresy. The scheme of confessional integration imposed in 1886 would have to compete with this self-inflicted legacy. It would remain difficult to persuade many of the Orthodox that the rites of the *edinovertsy* were entirely permissible.

Bishops

¹¹⁵ See point six of the Nizhnii Novgorod petition "Vazhnoe Sobytie" 1 and point (d) of the Moscow petition, RGIA, f. 796, op. 145, d. 2257, l.29ob.

¹¹⁶ *Sobranie mnenii*, 4:347.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 5:789–90.

¹¹⁸ RGIA, f. 832, op. 1, d. 81, l. 82-87ob.

¹¹⁹ "Neskol'ko predvaritel'nykh slov k 'iz''iasneniiu' smysla i znacheniiia poritsatel'nykh otzyvov o imenuemykh starykh obriadakh," *Bratskoe slovo*, no. 8 (1886): 583–88.

After Verkhovskii's petition and the establishment of the Old Believer commission in 1864, Synod decided to ask twenty-two prelates for their opinions on changes that needed to be made to *Edinoverie*. This request was bundled together with a question about how to conduct marriages between the Old Believers and the Orthodox, thus demonstrating just how interconnected the issue of reforms of *Edinoverie* and changes to the legal status of Old Belief were.¹²⁰ The key issue for the bishops was the matter of granting the *Edinoverie* their own prelate. The vote was surprisingly close: ten were in favour of some kind of bishop whilst twelve opposed the measure outright.¹²¹

Filaret (Drozdov) was not in favour. It was his opinion that the *Edinoverie* had already been given everything that could be given without violating the purity of Orthodoxy: 'to go further would mean not to draw the alienated closer to Orthodoxy and the Church but to sweep Orthodoxy from the correct path and to plunge the well ordered (*blagoustroennyi*) peace of the Church into the schismatic chaos of arbitrariness and disorganisation.'¹²² The fear of division preoccupied most of the bishops who opposed the idea. Antonii of Volynia was particularly eloquent on this matter, arguing that it would create two Orthodox Churches in Russia and thus whilst healing one schism, would cause a second.¹²³ Evgenii of Simbirsk pointed out that it would have no influence on the schismatics whatsoever since the fact of the matter was that the new bishop would be created by a Church that the Old Believers regarded as heretical.¹²⁴ Filaret of Ufa gave voice to one concern that dominated further discussions about *Edinoverie* and not just in relation to the bishop question. With the establishment of their own episcopate, 'perhaps then a great mass of the Orthodox people will freely convert to *Edinoverie*.'¹²⁵

Innokentii (Borisov) of Kamchatka, a future Metropolitan of Moscow, had a far more contradictory response. He argued that most *edinovertsy* had joined the movement not out of conviction in the truth of the Orthodox Church but simply to obtain their own priesthood: consequently they remained in 'the spirit of the schism.'¹²⁶ Nonetheless, the *edinovertsy* had still taken a decisive step to establishing within themselves the spirit of 'true unity.' Innokentii backed the creation of a *Edinoverie* bishop as this would improve

¹²⁰ RGIA, f. 832. op. 1, d. 48, l. 1.

¹²¹ Ibid, l. 37-63.

¹²² RGIA, f. 832. op. 1, d. 48, l. 25.

¹²³ L. K. Brodskii, "K voprosu ob edinovercheskom episkop: istoricheskaiia spravka," *Khristianskoe Chtenie*, no. 6 (1906): 911.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 913.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 916.

¹²⁶ Ibid., no. 7, 117.

the influence of *Edinoverie* on Old Belief, presumably by raising its prestige and demonstrating the full extent of the unity between Orthodoxy and *Edinoverie*.¹²⁷ However, Innokentii also had doubts. Giving the *edinovertsy* a bishop, he explained, would make *Edinoverie* and the Orthodox Church sisters. Sisters were not one and the same: they were not united.¹²⁸ Makarii (Bulgakov) of Kherson, the famous church historian and another celebrated Metropolitan of Moscow, went quite far in suggesting that a single *Edinoverie* bishop with jurisdiction over the *edinovertsy* of all the Russian Empire.¹²⁹

It is evident that Verkhovskii's petition and its radical terms evidently had a substantial influence on most of the bishops who replied positively. The trend in their replies is to turn down outright Verkhovskii's desired independent Old Believer hierarchy and then to assert that a bishop or episcopate subordinated to the Synod was possible. Filaret of Chernigov is a case in point. He conceded that bishops under the Synod were possible and even desirable but then proclaimed that 'to allow that the so called Old Believers could ever form a hierarchy independent from the Holy Synod of the Russian Church would mean the same as to legalise the schism by the order of the Synod itself, introducing a division into the Church that is as incompatible with the unity of the Holy Orthodox Church as it would be fatal for the united authority of the Russian state.'¹³⁰

The division in the Synod over the bishop question reflects the fundamental tension that the Church faced in the wake of the reign of Nicholas I. The incorporation of a mass of insincere converts essentially justified all the fears that Platon had had when he created his settlement. The confessional anxieties that had led him to blockade *Edinoverie* outside Orthodoxy and deny them the right to episcopal representation were not only present but also were perhaps stronger in the 1860s. Bishops were a contentious subject because of the danger they posed if the *edinovertsy* were disingenuous. Properly consecrated, these bishops would give the Old Believers a fully legitimate hierarchy if they defected. However, there was also a realisation that reform of *Edinoverie* was necessary if the critiques of the schismatics and Verkhovskii were to be countered.

The question of bishops arose again in 1885 but in a very different way. On 10 January, Pobedonostsev wrote to Subbotin that the Metropolitan of Kiev had suggested to the

¹²⁷ Ibid., 118.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 120.

¹²⁹ Ibid., no. 6, 927.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 928.

Synod that Pavel Prusskii should be the new suffragan bishop of Novocherkassk whilst remaining resident in the Nikol'skii monastery in Moscow. The ober-procurator agreed with the suggestion, believing it was high time that Pavel was honoured with such a reward.¹³¹ Pavel, however, refused, firstly citing his health and secondly questioning the value of making a *edinoverets* a bishop. He did not want 'to pave the way for the *edinovertsy* to trouble (*stuzhat'*) the government about establishing *Edinoverie* bishops.'¹³² Subbotin gave a much fuller explanation to Pobedonostsev in his reply on 18 January:

As a *edinoverets*, his position in the Church would present uncomfortable problems to making him a bishop. It would be necessary for him either to reject *Edinoverie* or, remaining a *edinoverets*, to be made into a *Edinoverie* bishop! Firstly, he would not be able to decide [upon the latter course] because many in this could, although completely unjustifiably but plausibly, suspect him of ambition: and he would not decide to be made a *Edinoverie* bishop because from here could arise many difficulties for the Church – it is adequate to point to the fact that this event would represent something similar to the realisation of the dreams of Verkhovskii and could at least revitalise these dreams. Here is why I suggested that father Pavel decline the proposal about the episcopate[...]¹³³

Why did Subbotin reject the idea of promoting Pavel to the episcopate? On the surface, it would seem to have been one of the best ways of realising confessional integration. Pavel, an entirely loyal son of the Church and friend of the Synodal order, would be made a bishop, thus answering one the main demands of the *edinovertsy* and thoroughly countering Verkhovskii's plans.

The answer lies in the limitations on Subbotin's understanding of integration. Subbotin believed that unity in faith meant being the same in all things apart from ritual. This meant administrative unity as well. The idea of having separate *Edinoverie* bishops was a step too far. It would only further institutionalise differences between Orthodoxy and *Edinoverie*. Subbotin was aware that the rules of Platon and subsequent legislation had set up unique administrative forms that served to divide the *edinovertsy* from the Orthodox. They had their own superintendents, their own priests, their own monasteries and they were (at least theoretically) beyond the jurisdiction of the consistories. Ritual difference

¹³¹ V. S. Markov, *K istorii raskola-starobriadchestva vtoroi poloviny XIX stoletia. Perepiska N. I. Subbotina, priemushchestvenno neizdannai, kak material dlia istorii raskola i otnoshenii k nemu pravitel'stva (1865-1904)*. (Moscow, 1914), 389.

¹³² N. Subbotin, *Eshche piatnadsat' let sluzheniia tserkvi bor'biu s raskolom. (Moia perepiska s arkhimandritom Pavlom za 1879-1895)* (Moscow, 1904), 337–338.

¹³³ Markov, *K istorii*, 390.

had become institutionalised and a degree of separation had occurred which could only be counter-productive in terms of further integrating the *edinovertsy* into the Orthodox confession. So Subbotin's refusal to countenance the promotion of even so close an associate as Pavel to the episcopate shows that he did not want to add any further to the process of ritual institutionalisation. To do so would be prejudicial to confessional integration, a plan that sought to emphasise unity and downplay division in all matters other than ritual. As Innokentii (Borisov) had said, bishops would make *Edinoverie* and Orthodoxy sisters, not one and the same.

The Single Confession

The changes to the rules in 1881 were the first step towards the Synod accepting Subbotin's plan of confessional integration. The second came with the declaration of the episcopal council in Kazan between 9 and 25 July 1885.¹³⁴ The assembled bishops, representing the dioceses of the Volga region and the western provinces, affirmed Subbotin's interpretation of true *Edinoverie* in its entirety:

Edinoverie does not represent any special confession, distinct from Orthodoxy: Orthodoxy and *Edinoverie* comprise one Church. In Orthodox and *Edinoverie* churches they recognise the same Lord, confess the same faith, perform the same baptism, take together the same purgatorial bloodless sacrifice of Christ and accept the same pure life-giving Body and Blood. In a word, here and there is one and the same, identical in everything by which man lives and eats. Therefore, from one side [i.e. the side of the Orthodox] no-one should belittle or reproach that which is blessed by the Church [i.e. the *Edinoverie* rituals], no-one should think that the sacraments performed by *Edinoverie* priests have any less force and holiness. From the side of the *edinovertsy* themselves, they must remember – and these things need to be instilled in them – that the strength of *Edinoverie* is in union with the Orthodox Church, that without this union, there is no *Edinoverie*, but again will be schism, and that therefore under the keeping of the so called 'old' rituals there should be no repudiation of the ritual kept by the Orthodox Church and, vice versa, repudiations from the Orthodox side of the rituals kept by the *edinovertsy*.¹³⁵

There could be no clearer statement of confessional integration. The bishops directly said that *Edinoverie* did not constitute its own confession and was fully part of the Orthodox

¹³⁴ For a description of its activities, see A. Kravetskii, *Tserkovnaia missiia v epokhu peremen (mezhdupropoved'iu i dialogom)*. (Moscow, 2012), 27–37.

¹³⁵ Quoted in N. Subbotin, *O edinoverii (po povodu ego stoletniago iubil'ia)* (Moscow, 1901), 134–135.

Church. The old rituals were as legitimate and effective in terms of grace as the corrected ones and as such no one from either side was to engage in polemics on the basis of ritual. Furthermore, unity was something that had to be ‘instilled’ in the *edinovertsy*, a word that indicates the prelates were conscious that they could not rest on their laurels when it came to promoting union. More was to follow. In 1886, the Synod sent an edict to the diocesan bishops on behest of the Kazan’ Council in which the Church stated that prelates could make up their own mind as to whether to allow the Orthodox to join *Edinoverie*.¹³⁶ In theory, this rendered rule five null and void, thus shattering the final border between the two groups and allowing for free passage between them as if they were members of one and the same confession. From 1886 we can talk of a Synodal policy of confessional integration that stressed unity and the *de facto* equality of rituals.

However, the final form of Kazan’ statement was a close run thing. The original draft stated that ‘the unconditional full equality of the two rituals existing along side each other and free conversion from one to another would lead to disorder and internal confusion in church parish life.’¹³⁷ Evidently there remained some bishops who wanted to keep the boundaries in place and they had been considerable enough in number to impose their voice on the initial version of the declaration. It is probable that Pobedonostsev’s presence in Kazan’ led to the more favourable final version. However, he could not ensure that all bishops, priests and missionaries would internalise the terms of the resolution or make use of the freedom to ignore the fifth rule of Platon. The original draft demonstrates that bishops continued to believe that the rituals were not equal and thus would do what they could to protect the Orthodox from the spread of the old rites. The fact that the 1800 settlement still existed meant they could do so legitimately.

Conclusion

With the ascension of Konstantin Pobedonostev, Verkhovskii got the opportunity to test his commitment to martyrdom. As early as January 1882, Pobedonostsev complained to Subbotin he would like to deal with Verkhovskii but ‘to persecute him would drive him to the schism.’¹³⁸ On 27 January 1885, Verkhovskii heard from a trusted source that he has about to be dealt with.¹³⁹ At half past eight in the morning the next day, he fled to Moscow

¹³⁶ RGIA, f. 796, op. 166, d. 1486, l. 167ob.

¹³⁷ Ibid., l. 30ob-31ob.

¹³⁸ Markov, *K istoriii*, 234.

¹³⁹ In a letter to T. I. Filippov shortly after his flight, Verkhovskii mentions only vague threats to his person. He claimed that he had wanted to stay in Petersburg and face his fate but his daughter had begged him to flee: see GARF, f. 1099, op. 1, d. 1552, l. 45-46.

by train and there met with a monk of the Belaia Krinitza hierarchy. After accepting a blessing from the schismatic Bishop of Moscow, Verkhovskii had his hair cut and changed from his vestments. He was then smuggled across the border to a Belaia Krinitza monastery in the Balkans. From there he protested his innocence and his loyalty to the Russian Tsar but to no avail. He was excommunicated in March and the Russian embassies in Berlin, Vienna and Constantinople were ordered to keep a strict eye on him lest he try and return.¹⁴⁰ In response, he told Filippov that he would now ‘place all the unpleasant tyrannical exclusions of Old Believers before the court of the entire world.’ This he did so in short order, publishing three volumes of his collected essays in Leipzig.¹⁴¹ He was eventually given permission to return to Petersburg in early 1891. He died only a few days after his arrival on 17 January. He was buried reconciled with the Church but unmourned by it.¹⁴²

Verkhovskii’s fate and the Kazan episcopal council marked the victory of Subbotin’s scheme for confessional integration. It no longer had any substantial opponents within *Edinoverie* itself and the council’s resolutions had been proclaimed as Synodal policy. The Synod had made substantial revisions to the rules of Platon, had publicly declared that *Edinoverie* and Orthodoxy were one confession and had even been prepared to raise Pavel Prusskii to the episcopate. While the Church authorities were still unwilling to remove the anathemas, they had at least conceded an explanation. Filaret (Drozdov) had removed the most offensive sections from Orthodox prayer books and the Synod had published a clarification that the polemics of the eighteenth century belonged to individuals alone and did not represent the opinions of the Church.

By 1886, the Synod had answered the Platonic contradictions by favouring conscience over confession, inclusion over quarantine and ritual tolerance over ritual exclusivity. By moderating or circumventing the prohibition against Orthodox converting to *Edinoverie*, conscience had won a moderate victory. It was now easier, at least theoretically, for an Orthodox believer to consciously choose to be part of *Edinoverie*. The additions to the eleventh rule also meant that the Orthodox could consciously choose to have the liturgy administered by the old rite. This concession was achieved by expanding the parameters of the Orthodox confession. By including *Edinoverie* in it, the Synod could safely

¹⁴⁰ RGIA, f. 796, op. 166, d. 1486, l. 7.

¹⁴¹ GARF, f. 1099, op. 1, d. 1552, l. 54.

¹⁴² R. A. Maiorov, his only biographer, has noted that Verkhovskii may have been buried by the ceremony accorded to priests but the sources are unclear as to whether this actually happened. See R. A. Maiorov, “Edinoverie,” 157.

concede that the Orthodox had the right to follow their consciences in this limited matter. It did not mean that one had the right to follow one's conscience to another confession. Rather, it meant that one could chose a different ritual settlement within Orthodoxy.

This provided the answer to the second contradiction as well since *Edinoverie* was now included in the Orthodox confession. Through these reforms, the Synod had abandoned the practice of quarantining the *edinovertsy*. While doubts remained as to the intentions and beliefs of the converts, it was held to be more dangerous to keep them on the periphery of Orthodoxy. Only by bringing them within the confession could the Church's commitment to unity be made transparent and hopefully stave off apostasy.

Finally, the assimilation of the *edinovertsy* into Orthodoxy via ritual fusion was theoretically abandoned. By including *Edinoverie* in Orthodoxy, the Synod had conceded that there were two legitimate ritual forms and ergo no need for the *edinovertsy* to abandon the old rites. This meant that the Nikonian rituals could no longer define the Orthodox confession. In its place, a new marker of Orthodox confessional identity emerged, ritual tolerance. At least from the point of view of the Church administration, to be Orthodox meant to be ritually tolerant. To be a schismatic meant to be fanatical and exclusive in relation to rites. The commitment to tolerance was limited. It did not meant the ritual freedom backed by Filippov, who believed that it could be extended to virtually any form of liturgical compact. What it meant was that the Church was willing to accept both the old and the new rituals as part of the confession so long as all who used the old rites conceded that the Orthodox Church was canonically legitimate.

On paper the change seems dramatic. However, the reality was much more complex. The Church had remained divided on how to deal with *Edinoverie* throughout the period. When asked about the desirability of *Edinoverie* bishops, the Synod had split almost down the middle. The professors consulted about the changes to the rules had also come to no consensus: two were in favour of changes and two were opposed. As a result, it took until the 1880s for any change to be made. When the shift in policy did occur, it was due to outside pressure. The 1881 corrections and the 1885 credo were made to block Verkhovskii's radicalism from gaining any more adherents, to reinvigorate *Edinoverie* in response to the 1883 extension of toleration and, perhaps most crucially, because Pobedonostsev intervened personally in favour of reform. As we will see in chapter V and in the second half of the thesis, the Synod made no real effort to realise integration until the beginning of the twentieth century. A substantial number of prelates, theologians, priests and missionaries also remained committed to the 1800 settlement and the

confessional attitudes that it contained until 1917. The fact that the Platonic rules had not been abolished outright meant that these parties could continue to apply them and thus continue provoking the very same feelings of denominational difference that driven Verkhovskii into radicalism and ultimately revolt.

Nor were the other steps taken by the Synod definitive. The anathemas had been explained but not abolished. Consequently, the Old Believers would continue to point to them as a sign of *Edinoverie*'s illegitimacy and *edinovertsy* would continue to be worried by them. Subbotin's scheme of integration completely rejected the idea of bishops. Unity had to be in all things other than ritual and *Edinoverie* bishops would just serve to institutionalise the difference between the two groups. However, the *edinovertsy* would continue to ask for episcopal representation.

Most importantly, the Synod could not undo the previous eighty years. They could not undo the way in which the rules and their contradictions had wrought themselves on the religious landscape of Russia. The hope that the *edinovertsy* could be persuaded of the ritual re-evaluation was juxtaposed to the reality of the institutionalisation of ritual through *Edinoverie* monasteries, priests, superintendents and schools. This had led to the emergence of administrative and communal distinction and to the hardening of attitudes to ritual.

IV: The Structures of *Edinoverie*, 1825-1917

Introduction

For almost the entirety of *Edinoverie*'s existence, it was bound by the rules of Platon. These gave it a uniform set of privileges and restrictions that could be applied across the Russian Empire. They set out how *Edinoverie* was to fit in to the administrative structures of the Russian Orthodox Church and determined the relationship of *edinovertsy* with parishioners, priests and prelates. They defined the shape of *Edinoverie* and its position in relation to both Orthodoxy and Old Belief, providing the contours that demarcated all three groups. The administrative and confessional boundaries formed through the 1800 settlement were not theoretical or abstract. Through church policy, they impacted on the religious lives of believers, moulding the ways in which they converted and worshipped. As one historian commented, '*Edinoverie* became thought of as inseparable from the rules of 1800.'¹ However, as fundamental as his settlement was, Platon could not predict the future. Many manifestations of *Edinoverie* religious life emerged from the caesuras that the sixteen rules left open. Nicholas I could claim an almost equal influence on *Edinoverie* by incorporating it into his scheme of confessionalisation. This ultimately transformed its fortunes in ways that were not entirely predictable.

The chapter will set out a brief social history of *Edinoverie* from the reign of Nicholas I to the Russian Revolution. This is a *long duree* account of how the rules of Platon and Nicolaevan confessionalisation formed the experience of *edinovertsy*. I will consider numerical strength, geographical distribution, administrative structures and distinctive institutions. A second aim is to examine how the contradictions inherent within the rules of Platon helped to create a sense of difference between *Edinoverie* and Orthodoxy. It was not only the boundaries between the two groups that helped foster this separation but also the privileges that the *edinovertsy* gained from the rules. These privileges were meant to make *Edinoverie* more attractive to those within and without the new movement. Thirdly, I will examine *Edinoverie*'s relationship with Old Belief by taking into account polemics, daily interactions, and the impact of conversions. By analysing the difficulties that *Edinoverie* had with both the Church and the schism, we come to a better understanding of *Edinoverie*'s liminal position between Orthodoxy and Old Belief. It allows me to reach some tentative conclusions about the question of confessional

¹ K. Plotnikov, *Istoriia Russkogo raskola staroobriadchestva* (St Petersburg, 1911), 199.

identities that will set up a more intensive interrogation of this problem in the following chapter.

Statistics

When it comes to the statistics of *Edinoverie*, the historian is hamstrung by an unfortunate insufficiency. From its creation in 1800 to the Church Council of 1917, no official survey of the number of *edinovertsy* or their churches was conducted. This makes it impossible to provide substantive figures about their size or to ask questions about growth or decline over this considerable period.² The *edinovertsy* found this issue no less problematic. The second National *Edinoverie* Congress in July 1917 addressed the question and it was decided to compile a thorough census. However, this work was never started.³

While no definite number exists, there is clear evidence of growth in this period. Simeon Shleev, in his history of *Edinoverie*, stated that no more than 10 *Edinoverie* churches were founded throughout the reign of Alexander I (1801 to 1825). By 1851, there were a total of 179 parishes.⁴ One writer counted 223 *Edinoverie* churches throughout the Russian Empire as of 1864.⁵ This is a substantial and impressive growth rate, no doubt aided by Nicholas I's repression of Old Belief. After this period, we are in the dark. The 1867 figure does not support the optimistic estimate of 600 parishes given by various individuals in the early twentieth century since this would imply more than a doubling in size in half a century.⁶ There is no reason to believe that *Edinoverie* endured such prodigious growth since conversion numbers dropped markedly from 1861 onwards.

Things become no clearer when we consider the number of *edinovertsy* in the Russian Empire. E. E. Lebedev, writing a statistical essay in 1904 based entirely on the reports of the ober-procurator, stated that 235,498 people converted from Old Belief to *Edinoverie* between 1828 and 1895. 164,504, or nearly 70%, joined between 1828 and 1855.⁷ However, it is difficult to use this figure even as a baseline. Such conversion statistics

² Regrettably, the 1897 census, the source of so much other useful information for the late imperial period, is not helpful: the Orthodox and the *edinovertsy* were counted together as one group, making it impossible to distinguish between the two.

³ See the planned questionnaire in *Vtoroi Vserossiiskii s'ezd pravoslavnykh staroobriadtssev (edinoveritsev) v N. Novgorode 23-28 iulia 1917 goda*. (Petrograd, 1917), 84–87.

⁴ Simon (Shleev), *Edinoverie v svoem vnutrennem razvitii* (Moscow, 2004), 146; 156.

⁵ M. S., *Istoricheskii ocherk edinoveriia* (St Petersburg, 1867), 197.

⁶ See Shleev's estimate in 1917 in *Vtoroi Vserossiiskii s'ezd*, 42.

⁷ E. E. Lebedev, *Edinoverie v protivodeistvii russkomu obriadovomu raskolu. Ocherk po istorii i statistike edinoveriia s obzorom sushchestvuiushchikh o nem mnenii i prilozheniiami* (Novgorod, 1904), 23–25. The total figure for the period 1828–1895 does not include the years 1862 to 1865 as figures were not compiled for these years.

were legendarily inaccurate since they were often inflated and they do not account for the birth or death rate within *Edinoverie*, conversion from it to Old Belief or transfer to it from Orthodoxy. Antonii (Khrapovitskii) guessed at the number of one million in 1918 but this figure is highly improbable.⁸

By using diocesan figures, we can come to a very rough approximation of *Edinoverie*'s standing in the final decades of imperial Russia. I have relatively precise data for Perm' (41 parishes and 54,148 parishioners in 1911), Tobol'sk (17 parishes, 20,614 parishioners in 1915), Tomsk (26,635 parishioners in 1901), St. Petersburg (four parishes, 2,865 parishioners in 1899), Tver' (five parishes, 1,826 parishioners in 1914), Polotsk (eight parishes, 4,547 parishioners in 1884), Kostroma (19 parishes, 9,672 parishioners in 1911), Ekaterinburg (33 parishes, 24,384 parishioners in 1887), Orenburg (11 parishes, 15,379 parishioners in as of 1898: the figure excludes numbers for the Ural'sk and Turgaisk *oblasti*), Viatka (16 parishes, 8,969 parishioners in 1912), Penza (12 parishes, 3,591 parishioners in 1905) and the Starodub' region in Chernigov (17 parishes, 10,153 parishioners in 1905). Moscow had two principal parishes and two much smaller ones under its monasteries. An Old Believer journalist suggested in 1908 that the parishioners there consisted of 400 to 500 families.⁹ Nizhnii Novgorod had around 14,000 parishioners in 20 parishes in 1900. The one place in the Empire where the *edinovertsy* did make up a majority was the Ural'sk *oblast'*. A report of the ataman from 1901 stated that of an estimated 112,000 Christians, there were 3000 Orthodox, 54,000 *edinovertsy* and over

⁸ *Deianiia*, LXXXIII, vol. 7 (Moscow, 1918), 13. The missionary N. Griniakin also made a rough estimate of one million: this would suggest that one million was a commonly accepted figure. For Griniakin's estimate, see V. M. Skvortsov, ed., *Pervyi Vserossiiskii edinovercheskii s'ezd* (St. Petersburg, 1912), 73–74.

⁹ P. Ershov, ed., *Spravochnaia kniga Permskoi eparkhii na 1912 god* (Perm', 1911), 106–111; 212–213; L. N. Suslova, "Edinoverie v Tobol'skoi gubernii vo vtoroi polovine XIX - nachale XX v.," *Problemy istorii Rossii*, no. 7 (2008): 217; D. N. Belikov, *Tomskii raskol': (istoricheskii ocherk s 1834 po 1880-ie gody)* (Tomsk, 1901), 194; N. M. Kutepov, ed., *Pamiatnaia kniga po S.-Peterburgskoi eparkhii* (St. Petersburg, 1899), 201–204; A. I. Prostoserdov, *Volkovskoe edinovercheskoe kladbishche. K stoletiiu ego blagoveshchenskoi tserkvi, 1816-1916*. (Petrograd, 1916), 81; A. Geno, *Dannie o Peterburgskoi eparkhii. K 200-letiiu S.-Peterburga*. (St Petersburg, 1901), 10; *Spravochnaia kniga po Tverskoi eparkhii na 1915 god*. (Tver', 1914), 450–451; *Statisticheskie svedeniie o tserkvakh i prichtakh Polotskoi eparkhii* (Vitebsk, 1884), 87–89; *Kratkie statisticheskie svedeniia o prikhodskikh tserkvakh Kostromskoi eparkhii. Spravochnaia kniga*. (Kostroma, 1911), 216; 398–485; *Adres-kalendar' Ekaterinburgskoi eparkhii na 1887 god*. (Ekaterinburg, 1887), 72–74; 90–91; 122–123; N. Chernavskii, *Orenburgskaia eparkhiia v proshlom i nastoiashchem*, vyp. VII, *Trudy orenburgskoi uchenoi arkhivnoi komissii* (Orenburg, 1900), 277–312; 320; *Viatskaia eparkhiia. Istoriko-geograficheskoe i statisticheskoe opisanie*. (Viatka, 1912), 76–83; 657–665; *Penzenskaia eparkhiia. Istoriko-staticheskoe opisanie*. (Penza, 1907), 36–37; "Chislennost' edinoveritsev i staroobriadtsev v 'Starodub'e,'" *Pravda pravoslaviia*, no. 16–17 (1907): 15–16; "Pravda o Moskovskikh edinovertsakh," *Tserkov'*, no. 51–52 (1908): 1785.

50,000 Old Believers.¹⁰ The unusual predominance of *Edinoverie* in the region led one excited writer to proclaim that ‘the Ural’sk *oblast*’ is truly a little kingdom of *Edinoverie!*’¹¹

If we collate all of the figures provided above, it is possible to make a rough estimate as to the number of parishes and *edinovertsy* by 1917. 600 parishes is too high: I would tentatively suggest that the number was no fewer than 250 but certainly no more than 400. Thus, Irina Paert’s estimate of 300 parishes by 1917 is probably close to the mark.¹² There were never a million *edinoversty*: given the information presented, it seems unlikely that their population ever peaked above 350,000.

Edinoverie had spread across the Russian Empire even before 1800. A parish was established in the distant Irkutsk diocese in 1798.¹³ At the end of the nineteenth century, virtually every diocese had at least one *Edinoverie* parish. The exceptions were typically those dioceses in Russian Poland, Georgia and Finland, although the Warsaw diocese did in fact have two *Edinoverie* parishes as of 1907.¹⁴ Unsurprisingly, the spread of *Edinoverie* was connected to the presence of Old Believer populations from whence converts could be gained. This no doubt accounts for the strength of *Edinoverie* populations in the Urals and Siberia. Old Believers were present here in considerable numbers from the late seventeenth century onwards due to exile, flight from the close surveillance of the central provinces or because the Demidov family had relocated them there to work in their vast network of factories and mines.¹⁵

Edinoverie managed to spread beyond the borders of the Russian Empire in the latter half of the nineteenth century. One parish was founded near the Belaia Krinitsa hierarchy’s headquarters in Bukovina and the other was located on the coast of Lake Kuş in western

¹⁰ RGIA, f. 796, op. 190, VI otd. 3 st., d. 15, l. 82.

¹¹ V. Demidov, “K voprosu ob ucherezhdanii edinovercheskogo episkopata v g. Ural’ske,” *Pravda pravoslaviia* no. 28–29 (1907): 5.

¹² I. Paert, *Old Believers, Religious Dissent and Gender in Russia, 1760-1850* (Manchester, 2003), 61.

¹³ R. V. Kaurkin and O. A. Pavlova, *Edinoverie v Rossii: ot zarozhdeniia idei do nachala XX veka* (St. Petersburg, 2011), 68.

¹⁴ Pravoslavnyi, “Edinoverie v Varshavskoi eparkhii,” *Pravda pravoslaviia*, no. 18–19 (1907): 14; For a detailed description of one of the parishes, see A. Nikol’skii, *Shestidesiatletie 1843-1903 pokrovskoi edinovercheskoi tserkvi v Kholmsko-Varshavskoi eparkhii* (Warsaw, 1904).

¹⁵ For the Demidov recruitment of Old Believers, see H. D. Hudson, *The Rise of the Demidov Family and the Russian Iron Industry in the Eighteenth Century* (Newtonville, MA: Oriental Research Partners, 1986), 49, 56. For an example of government relocation of Old Believers to Siberia under Catherine the Great, see F. F. Bolonev, *Staroobriadtsy Altaia i Zabaikal’ia: Opyt sravnitel’noi kharakteristiki*, 2nd ed. (Barnaul, 2001), 10–13.

Anatolia.¹⁶ Both of these communities were under the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, a fact that was often flourished to demonstrate that ‘*Edinoverie* is recognised by the Patriarch himself as an entirely legal and correct institution (*ucherezhdenie*).’¹⁷ These parishes thus provided a *de facto* solution to *Edinoverie*’s ecumenical dimension, although their existence never stopped the *edinovertsy* from requesting a patriarchal explanation of the anathemas.

Edinoverie was a tiny fraction of the total Orthodox population. Even in Perm’, the *edinovertsy* of the diocese made up only 5.5% of all those registered as Orthodox in 1881.¹⁸ If we take the figure of 350,000 and compare it to the number of Orthodox in Russia in 1897 (87, 123, 604), then we find that they constituted 0.4% of the total.¹⁹ No less notable was that the *edinovertsy* were concentrated most strongly in distant regions of the Empire. It is therefore prudent to assume that *Edinoverie* had only a marginal impact on the lives of most Orthodox believers. This may account for the relative lack of attention that Orthodox prelates paid to *Edinoverie* parishes, a common complaint that the *edinovertsy* had against their bishops. Not only did some of them hold *Edinoverie* rituals in contempt but also the number of this flock was so small in comparison to the rest of the faithful that it must have seemed barely worth a hierarch’s already constrained time to deal with them, especially when it was so easy to trample on the sensibilities of the *edinovertsy*. Metropolitan Filaret (Drozdov) was once quoted as saying ‘it was easier to manage a whole diocese than one *Edinoverie* parish.’²⁰ Thus, a feeling of separateness and isolation from the Orthodox Church may have derived from relative numerical insignificance and geographical isolation.

Edinoverie’s impact on Old Belief in demographic and geographical terms was more pronounced. *Edinoverie* parishes were formed out of the Old Believer communities, a fact that ensured schismatics would be resident near the new churches. Therefore interactions between the *edinovertsy* and the Old Believers were much more prolonged and closer

¹⁶ For the Bukovina church, see V. M. Skvortsov, ed., *Iubileinoe torzhestvo pravoslavnogo staroobriadchestva (edinoveriia). (27 oktiabria 1900)* (St Petersburg, 1901), 23–24. For accounts of the Kuş *edinovertsy*, of whom there were roughly 600, see RGIA, f. 796, op. 160, d. 1745, I. Vinogradov, *Uchrezhdenie edinoveriia u mainostsev* (Moscow, 1880) and R. A. Maiorov, “*Edinoverie i lider ego soedinencheskogo napravleniia vtoroi poloviny XIX veka sviashchennik Ioann Verkhovskii*” (Kand. diss., Moskovskii pedagogicheskii gosudarstvennyi universitet, 2008), 67–78.

¹⁷ Skvortsov, *Iubileinoe torzhestvo*, 24.

¹⁸ *Permskii eparkhial’nyi adres-kalendar’ na 1882* (Perm’, 1882), 171.

¹⁹ Census figure quoted from A. A. Dorskaia, *Svoboda sovesti v Rossii: sud’ba zakonoproektov nachala XX veka* (St. Petersburg, 2001), 18.

²⁰ *Deianiia*, vol. 6 (Moscow, 1918), 110.

than those they had with the Orthodox. In Viatka, 6,724 Old Believers lived in *Edinoverie* parishes: thus, only 55% of their residents were *edinovertsy*.²¹ In Starodub', the Old Believers outnumbered the *edinovertsy* almost five to one.²² The picture is different for Perm' in 1883, however: the Old Believers in *Edinoverie* parishes numbered only 10,028 compared to over 100,000 *edinovertsy*.²³ While the numbers of schismatics in all of these cases were undoubtedly underestimated, they do point to how intensive the contact was between Old Believers and *edinovertsy* within *Edinoverie* parishes.

Comparing the national figures for both *Edinoverie* and Old Belief gives a sense of how much *Edinoverie* dented Old Belief over the course of its existence. General estimates for Old Belief at the beginning of the twentieth century range between ten and twenty million.²⁴ Therefore *Edinoverie* constituted 1.75-3.5% of the general total. It was little more than a drop in the schismatic ocean. However, it is somewhat misleading to consider Old Belief as a single category, given that it was divided into a substantial number of concords. Whilst these concords were larger than the figures imply, *Edinoverie* was numerically comparable to the separate priestly groups. Official statistics for the Belaia Krinitsa hierarchy and the *beglopopovtsy* in 1912 stated that the former was 788,425 strong and the latter 260,950.²⁵ What is certain is that by 1917 *Edinoverie* had not accomplished its original mission of bringing the schism to an end: indeed, it had hardly scratched the surface.

Institutions

Platon's sixth rule stated that the *edinovertsy* were to be directly under the supervision of the bishop. The idea was to remove the consistory from the chain of command. Nicholas I's edict of 5 April 1845 directly confirmed this, telling the bishops 'in the matters of *Edinoverie* churches do not allow any participation of either the ecclesiastical consistories or other diocesan authorities.'²⁶ However, the fact that it was rarely enforced gave rise to friction. Three *edinovertsy* from the town of Nikolaev on 5 November 1909 complained that 'the subordination to the orders of the ecclesiastical consistory terribly oppresses us.' They accused the consistory of closing schools and filling those that remained with

²¹ *Viatskaia eparkhiia*, 76–77.

²² "Chislennost' edinoveritsev," 15–16.

²³ "Svedeniia o edinovercheskikh prikhodakh," 82.

²⁴ I. V. Pozdeeva, "The Silver Age of Russia's Old Belief, 1905-17," in G. B. Michels and R. L. Nichols, eds., *Russia's Dissident Old Believers 1650-1950* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 67–68.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 76–77.

²⁶ *Trudy Moskovskogo edinovercheskogo s'ezda* (Moscow, 1910), 123–124.

Orthodox students and teachers, of destroying *Edinoverie* singing and seizing parish funds.²⁷

Deprived of the consistories, the edict of 1845 allowed bishops to create a new intermediary in the form of *Edinoverie* superintendents. This was a way for the bishops to delegate some of their duties of supervision to trustworthy priests, an action warranted by the rapidly growing number of *Edinoverie* parishes from 1825: ‘the superintendent makes himself a mediator or, more correctly, a guide for the reciprocal spiritual connections between representatives of the holy hierarchy and members of the *Edinoverie* flock.’²⁸ The bishop appointed these men from among the *Edinoverie* clergy. They were typically the priests of the largest or most senior churches of the diocese. They would then be assigned districts (*okrugi*) that covered some of the *Edinoverie* parishes. The number of *Edinoverie* superintendents depended on the size of the *Edinoverie* population of a diocese. St Petersburg only had one superintendent whilst Tobol’sk had three, although the third district contained only one church.²⁹ The parishes of Ekaterinburg diocese were divided into three *okrugi*: Ekaterinburg *uezd* (containing 15 churches), Verkhotur’sk *uezd* (6 churches) and Shadrinsk *uezd* (12 churches).³⁰ However, the reform was not always implemented. As late as 1905, the 12 *Edinoverie* parishes of Penza diocese were administratively part of Orthodox *okrugi*.³¹

Edinoverie’s administrative structure represented a mix of similarity and distinctiveness. The *edinoveritsy* of any given diocese were subordinated to a hierarchical order that was very close to that of the Orthodox, with the bishop at the top, the superintendent in the middle and the priest at the bottom. However, the middle and the bottom ranks of this hierarchy were usually dominated by *Edinoverie* clergy, giving the impression of a local *Edinoverie* chain of command short-circuited only by the presence of an Orthodox prelate at the top. This view was reinforced by the fact that superintendent districts fused *Edinoverie* parishes together into groups distinct from the Orthodox parishes. An Orthodox parish might be right next to a *Edinoverie* one but the latter would be

²⁷ Ibid., 64.

²⁸ N. Varushkin, “O edinoverii v Nizhnetagil’skom zavod i ego okrug,” *Pravoslavnyi sobesednik*, I, (1867), 314.

²⁹ *Tobol’skii eparkhialnyi adres-kalendar’ na 1897 god.* (Tobol’sk, 1897), 228.

³⁰ *Adres-kalendar’ Ekaterinburgskoi eparkhii*, 27.

³¹ *Penzenskaia eparkhiia*, 290–291.

supervised by its own superintendent: ‘*Edinoverie* churches in their administration were separated from the ranks of other Orthodox churches.’³²

Platon’s sixth rule gave the *edinovertsy* a right that they were reluctant to let go of. It made every incursion by the consistory seem like an Orthodox violation of treasured *Edinoverie* privileges and it furnished opportunities for friction between *edinovertsy*, the consistories and the bishops. In 1907, an elder at the Nikol’skaia church in St. Petersburg refused to give an explanation as to why he had refused a priest an allowance from church funds, reasoning that the consistory had no right to demand an explanation from him under the law of 1845. For his contumacy, the Metropolitan removed him from his post.³³

The World of the Clergy

Many of the secular, or white, clergy of the Russian Orthodox Church were in a particularly difficult position in their parishes, stuck as they were between the bishop and their parishioners. Both held power over them. The bishop expected them to improve moral standards, combat Old Belief and perform administrative tasks like fill in the metrical books: if they failed to accomplish these duties, then they could expect reprimands and punishment. However, since most of the clergy did not receive a wage from the state or the Church, they were economically dependent on their parishioners who would give them ‘donations’ for key ritual ceremonies, like baptisms, marriages and funerals.³⁴ Trying to prohibit popular superstitions or curb the excessive consumption of alcohol would necessarily lead to confrontations between the priest and his flock and the possible cessation of donations. This was true for the *Edinoverie* clergy as well: ‘the unpaid *Edinoverie* clergy are between two extremes. Required to strictly insist that the *edinovertsy* fulfil their religious duties, they risk being left without any means to live: in being indulgent to the weakness of their parishioners and in satisfying their arbitrary requirements, they risk trampling on Church rights and civil laws.’³⁵ Dependence on payments ‘effectively frustrated attempted by the Church and state to use clergy as “official agents” for social and religious control.’³⁶ The state itself was responsible for

³² Nikol’skii, *Shestidesiatletie 1843-1903*, 11.

³³ V. Solov’ev, “Skorbnyi put’,” *Pravda pravoslaviia*, no. 5–6 (1907): 13–14.

³⁴ State subsidies had begun to be issued to the Orthodox clergy in 1829: by 1905, two thirds of all parish priests received a subsidy but they were usually not substantial enough to liberate priests from the need for emoluments. G. L. Freeze, *Parish Clergy in 19th Century Russia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 453.

³⁵ V. P., “K voprosu o sostoianii edinoveriia v Sibiri,” *Tomskie eparkhial’nye vedomosti*, no. 8 (1884): 14.

³⁶ Freeze, *The Russian Levites*, 172.

this situation. When Catherine the Great secularised the Church's land in the 1760s, she essentially deprived the institution of the ability to pay its clergy a wage. Even as the state sought to make better use of the Church as an agent of control and then confessionalisation, it undermined it.

Dependence on parishioners was even more pronounced for *Edinoverie* clergy because the second rule of Metropolitan Platon confirmed the electoral principle in *Edinoverie* parishes. Not only were the clergy dependent on their parishioners for financial support but also for their positions: in *Edinoverie* parishes 'the priest is nothing, his parishioners everything.'³⁷ From the point of view of the Synod and the hierarchy, the matter was scarcely any better. Since the *edinovertsy* could (and often did) choose former Old Believer ministers to become the village priests, they could hardly rely on them to strengthen the sense of union with the Orthodox Church and to struggle against Old Believers. Whilst bishops retained the right to confirm or deny elections, they often had little choice in the matter since refusal to confirm the parish's choice might push them back to Old Belief.³⁸

An example is furnished from Kaluga province. Upon joining *Edinoverie* on 21 December 1854, a group of merchant converts wanted Grigorii Glinkin, a former Old Believer minister, as priest of their new parish since he was 'experienced in the ways of Old Belief [i.e. knew how to administer the old rituals].' They had come to a private arrangement with Glinkin that he would 'serve secretly in Old Belief under the façade (*lichnoi*) of *Edinoverie*.'³⁹ The bishop, rightly suspecting the choice, tried to force his own candidate on the parish. They adamantly refused, resulting in the prelate backing down and appointing Glinkin. In 1864, after a dispute with the bishop, Glinkin converted to the Belaia Krinitsa hierarchy. Most of his parish (60 of 70 people) broke off relations with the Church and returned to Old Belief.⁴⁰ Such priests were not the best supervisors for the *edinovertsy* and indeed posed a considerable danger if it later emerged that their conversions were less than genuine.

³⁷ "Pritiazaniia edinovertsev," *Tserkovno-obshchestvennyi vestnik*, no. 129, 131 (1878): 2.

³⁸ This caution could lead bishops and consistories to forgive fairly serious misdemeanours. In 1844, a Don superintendent reported a *Edinoverie* priest for his "greed for profit" which had led him to "taking exorbitant payment for the performance of rites – especially for marriage and baptism." The priest was only spared dismissal because the parishioners had elected him. N. V. Lysogorskii, *Edinoverie na Donu v XVIII i XIX v. (po 1883 g.)* (Sergiev Posad, 1915), 606–609.

³⁹ A. Zhuravlev, "O edinoverii v g. Sukhinichakhe," *Tserkov'* no. 26 (1911): 626.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 28, 677. Glinkin was arrested on 19 January 1866 and imprisoned in the Suzdal' monastery for 15 years: on release, he returned to his parish before dying a year later.

A second problem with the electoral principle was that it made infighting a prominent characteristic of *Edinoverie* parishes. Parties could form around candidates and lead protracted campaigns to have their man elected to the position, causing prolonged disruption and instability. The most famous example of such a conflict was that which occurred when Simeon Shleev attempted to oust Protohierarch Nikolai Kastorskii, the head priest (*nastoiatel'*) of the Nikol'skaia church in St. Petersburg between 1905 and 1907. The struggle became so intense that Kastorskii's supporters reported to the Petersburg police that Shleev and his fellow priest Aksenov had failed to say prayers for the Tsar, a political crime.⁴¹ The conflict was resolved only on 11 November 1907 when Kastorskii died, allowing Shleev to be elected to the vacant position. While extreme, the incident in Petersburg was not unique. In the Warsaw diocese, six psalmists came and went in the course of two years because of the 'party behaviour' of the parishioners.⁴² A similarly protracted struggle occurred in Tobol'sk between two candidates for the position of priest in 1911. It took several years and successive prelates to finally resolve.⁴³

Another disadvantage of the electoral system was the cultural distance it could foster between the *Edinoverie* clergy and their Orthodox counterparts. By 1860, over 80% of Orthodox priests wielded a seminary certificate and thus had undergone a similar formative experience that helped foster a sense of *soslovie* consciousness and, later, professional pride.⁴⁴ Those *Edinoverie* priests who had previously been Old Believer ministers did not possess this education or the experiences that came with it. Nor were they party to the closed clerical cultural world, which came complete with its own forms of dress, reading materials, and values. A valuable insight into the feeling that a new *Edinoverie* priest would have felt when confronted by this world is offered by the experience of Pavel Ivanovich Smirnov, a new convert who went to Novgorod to be ordained by the archbishop in 1892:

I knocked again on the door in order to be heard. Suddenly an alarmed man came running up to me:

-Who is making such a racket, why are you here?

-I have come to the bishop to be ordained as a priest.

The man looked at me from head to foot with a suspicious gaze. It must have been the first time he had seen such a creature: I was in an Old Believer caftan,

⁴¹ RGIA, f. 797, op. 77, V otd. 3 st., d. 3, l. 1. Many thanks to Professor Simon Dixon for this reference.

⁴² Nikol'skii, *Shestidesiatletie 1843-1903*, 22.

⁴³ RGIA, f. 796, op. 193, d. 1173.

⁴⁴ Freeze, *Parish Clergy*, 455.

an old peasant hat, simple boots, and with a knapsack in my hands: in a word, the purest rural provincial peasant.

He looked at me and said: wait here. Then he returned and took me with him. I went to the bishop, prayed, accepted his blessing and gave him the letter from Father Ksenofont.⁴⁵

The bishop read the letter, sat me in a chair and began to ask how I had lived in the schism, why I had joined the Orthodox Church and other such questions. I, of course, told him about all the details and cited to him many texts from the Scriptures about the illegitimate separation of the schismatics from the Church and how, through knowledge of the Scriptures, it was clear that bishops were placed in [the Church].

Good, he said, if it pleases God, then you will be a priest, let us pray. We prayed. Only now, he said, the matter is thus: tomorrow I leave to review the diocese for an entire month, you have not arrived in time: did you really not read about this in '*Tserkovnye vedomosti*'?⁴⁶

- No. Truth be told, this is the first time I have heard about this '*Tserkovnye vedomosti*'.⁴⁷

Smirnov, living in Novgorod whilst awaiting the bishop's return, further reported that 'at first the brothers of the episcopal residence were shy of me: they looked at me and asked me questions. I must have seemed like an alien creature to them.' He proceeded to tell a hieromonk that he had placed a crucifix in the wrong place ('truly, my remark confused many that day') and was bewildered when the bishop's steward came to fit him for clerical vestments: 'I did not even know that a priest needed a cassock.'⁴⁸ Smirnov found this world of newspapers and cassocks was alien to him. Nor would it have become any less so since he only had a month to learn the rudiments of service before his ordination. If his experience is representative, then there must have been a considerable cultural gulf between new *Edinoverie* priests and their Orthodox colleagues. However, any sense of isolation engendered by the electoral principle may have declined over time. On becoming part of the *Edinoverie* clergy, the sons of a former Old Believer minister would have access to church schooling. Ioann Verkhovskii benefited from a seminary education and so did Simeon Shleev.

⁴⁵ Ksenofont Kriuchkov, a prominent missionary and disciple of Pavel Prusskii.

⁴⁶ *Tserkovnye vedomosti* was the principal Synodal newspaper.

⁴⁷ S. Smirnov, *Zapiski sel'skogo sviashchennika. Dnevnikovye zapisi sviashchennosluzhitelia edinovercheskogo khrama arkhangela mikhaila sela Mikhailovskaia Sloboda protoiereia Stefana Smirnova, napisannye im samim s 1905 po 1933 god.*, ed. E. Sarancha (Moscow, 2008), 32–33.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 35.

The similarity between such priests and their parishioners might also have been a particular strength of the electoral system. Given that the parishioners elected them, the *Edinoverie* clergy may not have routinely encountered opposition from them. This would have especially been so when the priest was a former Old Believer: he would, at least initially, have looked much more like a parishioner and lacked the airs and graces that the Orthodox clergy tried to assume given their higher level of education. The reformers of the early twentieth century certainly thought that the preservation of the electoral principle in *Edinoverie* parishes meant that their religious life had not succumbed to the indifference and impiety that afflicted Orthodox communities: ‘where there is no freedom of parish election, there is no brotherhood and there is only slavery. This is serfdom with the priest at its head.’⁴⁹

Of primary importance to ascertaining the extent of the cultural gulf is to look at how many *Edinoverie* clergy lacked church education. There are no national figures but there are numbers from individual dioceses that give an indication. In 1911 in Perm’, there were 41 ordained priests (*sviashchenniki*) in the diocese: no educational information is provided for 8 of these men.⁵⁰ Of the remaining 33, 11 had not received any formal education: this included the superintendent. 7 (21%) had received church schooling and 14 (42%) had been educated in state schools: only one was a seminary graduate.⁵¹ Therefore, 75% of the *Edinoverie* clergy in Perm’ had been educated outside of the clerical estate schooling system. Of those who had been educated by the Church, only one had managed to go through the system in its entirety. In Viatka in 1912, 84% of the Orthodox clergy had at least some seminary education whilst none of the *Edinoverie* clergy had.⁵² Of the 87 ordained servitors in Tobol’sk between 1874 and 1915, 56% had some level of church schooling but only 20% had attended the seminary.⁵³ In St. Petersburg in 1899, only three of ten clergy had not been to the seminary.⁵⁴ The educational level of the clergy showed considerable regional variation but in general was quite low, even compared to declining seminary graduation among Orthodox clergy in the late imperial era.⁵⁵ This was either because of the election of former Old Believer

⁴⁹ N. Vasil’ev and S. Shleev, “K voprosu o neobkhodimosti nauchnoi podgotovki edinovercheskogo dukhovenstva,” *Missionerskoe obozrenie*, no. 7–8 (1905): 1101.

⁵⁰ ‘Ordained clergy’ means both priests and deacons.

⁵¹ *Permskii eparkhial’nyi adres-kalendar’*, 106–111.

⁵² *Viatskaia eparkhiia*, 82–83.

⁵³ Suslova, “Edinoverie v Tobol’skoi gubernii,” 228.

⁵⁴ Kutepov, *Pamiatnaia kniga*, 201–206.

⁵⁵ When the clerical estate was opened in the 1860s, the sons of the parish clergy were granted access to other professions and educational institutions. This caused flight from the clerical estate and a

ministers as priests or perhaps because some of the *edinovertsy* held Orthodox schools in suspicion.⁵⁶ Whether the lack of church schooling impacted on the quality of their service is impossible to say but it did mean that some *Edinoverie* clergy did not share the formative experience of the seminary with their Orthodox counterparts.

Clashes between the Orthodox and *Edinoverie* priesthoods were not just cultural: they could also take on an economic dimension. If the *edinovertsy* were supposed to eventually abandon their rituals and join Orthodoxy proper, as the second opinion of Platon dictated, then they would have to leave *Edinoverie* parishes and deprive the clergy of emoluments: 'here the interests of the clergy are contrary to the interests of the Church itself, which should not be in any case whatsoever.'⁵⁷ Thus, the institution of *Edinoverie* clergy undermined ritual assimilation. *Edinoverie* priests were also likely to be hostile to missionaries who sought to persuade the *edinovertsy* to undertake the final step to the Church.

For their part, the Orthodox clergy also had reason to fear losing parishioners, and thus income, to nearby *Edinoverie* churches: the priests knew that pre-Nikonian practices were very popular amongst the Orthodox parishioners and a nearby *Edinoverie* parish might be too tempting to ignore. Between 1828 and 1829, one *Edinoverie* priest in Chelabinsk was able to increase his parish from 660 to 1443 purely by proselytising amongst the Orthodox. The result was outrage from Orthodox priests: his actions 'were not lawful and not in the interests of Orthodox clergy, since they reduced the flock and equally served to [bring] disorder into the life of neighbouring Orthodox parishes.'⁵⁸ The complaints to the consistory resulted in the removal of the *Edinoverie* cleric. Given that Orthodox priests lived off the enumeration from their parishioners, it is not surprising to find that Orthodox priests were often vigilant defenders of the fifth rule of Platon that prohibited Orthodox transfer to *Edinoverie* churches.

The result was that *Edinoverie* priests were opposed to one way of ending *Edinoverie*'s liminal status, that achieved by confessional assimilation, and Orthodox clergy were

manpower shortage by the end of the nineteenth century. The Church was therefore obliged to ordain those with an incomplete seminary education. Consequently, the percentage of clerics with a seminary certificate declined from 88.1% in 1890 to 63.8% in 1904. Freeze, *Parish Clergy*, 455.

⁵⁶ Certainly the *edinovertsy* of the town of Vysk in Perm' diocese protested the bishop's choice to send them a seminarian in 1843. They preferred their priests to have been psalmists "who had learned from the Psalter alone." Varushkin, "O edinoverii," II, (1867): 276.

⁵⁷ V. P., "K voprosu," 12–13.

⁵⁸ N. Chernavskii, *Orenburgskaia eparkhiia v proshlom i nastoiashchem*, vyp. X, Trudy Orenburgskoi Uchenoi Arkhivnoi Komissii (Orenburg, 1901), 314–317.

opposed to the other method, that which was to be achieved by confessional integration. Thus, the settlement of 1800 interacted with the general economic condition of the clergy to produce resistance to both potential solutions to ending *Edinoverie*'s place on the outskirts of the Orthodox confession.

On occasion, an Orthodox priest would be selected to serve in a *Edinoverie* parish. Whilst in some cases the *edinovertsy* defended the right to elect one of their own very strongly, others acquiesced to the choice of the bishop, even if he picked an Orthodox cleric. Parishioners of the Sosednenskaia church in the outlying Petersburg region accepted Father Simeon Zhemchuzhin, an Orthodox priest with some knowledge of the old rite, when he was selected by Metropolitan Palladii. His presence only became onerous in 1902, more than a decade after his arrival, when a faction of *edinovertsy* took umbrage at the transfer of the church from *Edinoverie* to Orthodoxy.⁵⁹

No doubt a limiting factor in the appointment of Orthodox priests was their ignorance of the old rites. A Tomsk missionary congress in 1898 put its finger on the problem when it argued that 'the majority of *Edinoverie* priests from the Orthodox are completely unacquainted with the peculiarities of the *Edinoverie* church singing and also with the liturgical rituals.'⁶⁰ If they were not ignorant, then they were probably contemptuous. The hours and psalms on which Orthodox priests were raised contained passages from writers like St. Dimitrii of Rostov who condemned the two fingered sign of the cross as a monophysite heresy. Therefore many Orthodox priests probably did not want these appointments. L. N. Suslova refers to an instance in Tobol'sk diocese of an Orthodox priest being punished for a misdemeanour by transfer to a *Edinoverie* parish and more than forty petitions from clergy asking the bishop not to inflict a similar fate on them.⁶¹

The financial situation of *Edinoverie* priests depended very much on the economic life of their parishes. This was subject to enormous degrees of variation. No doubt the richest *Edinoverie* churches in the Empire were those in Petersburg. The grandiose Nikol'skaia church was so wealthy that its four clergy lived on the 28,000 roubles derived annually from the interest on church capital. This was supplemented by donations from rich

⁵⁹ RGIA, f. 796, op. 190 VI otd. 3 st., d. 30, l. 4.

⁶⁰ "Obzor deiatel'nosti pervogo eparkhial'nogo missionerskogo s''ezda v g. Tomske 10-27 avgusta 1898 goda," *Tomskie eparkhial'nye vedomosti*, no. 6 (1899): 9.

⁶¹ Suslova, "Edinoverie," 227-228.

Petersburg merchants and the rent received from two apartment buildings that the Church owned. The clergy also received accommodation from the church.⁶²

Elsewhere the picture was bleaker. In Perm', the richest parish was Sredne-Egviskoe where the clergy there received 220 roubles in donations in 1910, supplemented by 340 roubles in rent from its landholdings and the provision of housing for each of the three priests.⁶³ This did not necessarily mean that the parishioners in Egviskoe were rich: there were just more of them since this parish was the largest in the diocese with 2,800 *edinovertsy*. On the poorer end, a new parish in Arkhangel'sk diocese received only 25 roubles in donations in 1895, making its clergy entirely dependent on stipends received from the treasury.⁶⁴ In Tver', donations in 1914 were as high as 209 roubles and as low as 140: clergy of the main parish in Torzhok also received 1,600 roubles in interest from church capital.⁶⁵

No uniform policy was enacted to extend treasury payments to *Edinoverie* clergy but most parishes seem to have received subsidies by the end of the nineteenth century. In Polotsk in 1884, all of the clergy received payments ranging from 150 for psalmists to 550 for the lucky priest of the village of Iakubino.⁶⁶ The priest of the Pokrovskaia church in Warsaw diocese received 600 roubles at the church's foundation in 1843, which was increased to 1200 in 1867.⁶⁷ None the less, it would appear most were on much less than 1200 roubles since the Third All-Russian Missionary Congress argued in 1897 that 'better maintenance of *Edinoverie* priests could have influence on the improvement of the parishes themselves' and therefore *Edinoverie* priests should receive 600 roubles and psalmists 200 from the Synodal treasury.⁶⁸

For all intents and purposes, the *Edinoverie* clergy were not better off than their Orthodox counterparts either in terms of donations or treasury payments. However, there was one financial benefit to officiating in a *Edinoverie* church. An edict of 1808 exempted

⁶² Kutepov, *Pamiatnaia kniga*, 201–202.

⁶³ Ershov, *Spravochnaia kniga*, 107.

⁶⁴ "Poduzhetskii edinovercheskii prihod," *Arkhangel'skie eparkhial'nie vedomosti*, no. 11 (1896): 118.

⁶⁵ *Spravochnaia kniga*, 450–451.

⁶⁶ *Statisticheskie svedeniia*, 87–89.

⁶⁷ Nikol'skii, *Shestidesiatletie 1843-1903*, 26–27.

⁶⁸ V. M. Skvortsov, ed., *Deiianiia 3-go Vserossiiskogo missionerskogo s'ezda v Kazani, po voprosam vnutrennei missii i raskolosektantstva*, 2nd ed. (Kiev, 1898), 236.

Edinoverie from forwarding the profits from candle sales to the diocesan administration.⁶⁹ This could mean considerable additional wealth for a church and its clergy if the parish was large or located in a city. The small Solunskaiia parish in St. Petersburg made 1,085 roubles in candle sales in 1909.⁷⁰ However, this could be yet another reason for the Orthodox clergy to feel resentment towards *Edinoverie* priests. Profits from candle factories were usually channelled into the school system.⁷¹ Therefore the sons of *Edinoverie* clergy had access to the educational facilities of the Church but *Edinoverie* churches did not contribute to them. Although I have not found any instance where such dissatisfaction was voiced, it is noticeable that the replacement for the rules of Platon passed in 1918 abolished *Edinoverie*'s exemption from contributing to the needs of the Church.⁷²

The Parish and Parishioners

The character of the parish was dependent on hundreds of minute factors like wealth, proximity to the diocesan administration, the size of the Old Believer population, the distance to the nearest Orthodox priest, the character of the bishop, and the qualities of the clergy. Geography was no less important. Roads helped and rivers hindered the *edinovertsy* in gaining access not only to the sacraments but also to parish institutions, particularly schools and charitable foundations. Therefore local conditions played as much a role in shaping *Edinoverie* as the rules of Platon or the theological disputes of leaders in Moscow and Petersburg.

In its administration, the *Edinoverie* parish would not have looked much different from an Orthodox one. Its governing body, the parish council, was the same and its officials, church elders, performed the same tasks. These duties were, typically, the maintenance of the church and its grounds, representing the views of the parish to the clergy and accounting for parish funds. Some parishes also attained guardianships (*popechitel'stvo*) after they introduced by reforms in the 1860s. These were initially intended to provide

⁶⁹ For reference to the operation of this law in the Moscow diocese, see *Polnoe sobranie resoliutsii Filareta, mitropolita Moskovskogo*, vol. 4 (Moscow, 1914), 41. For its operation in Nizhnii Novgorod, see TsANO, f. 570, op. 559, d. 98 (1874), l. 27ob.

⁷⁰ *Otchet po sodержaniuu pokrovskoi, dmitrevskoi i mariinskoi edinovercheskikh tserkvei i kladbischa, chto na B. Okhte v S-Peterburge za dekabr mesiats 1908 g. za 1909, 1910 i 1911.* (St. Petersburg, 1912), 2–3.

⁷¹ D. Scarborough, "The White Priest at Work: Orthodox Pastoral Activism and the Public Sphere in Late Imperial Russia" (Ph.D. dissertation, Georgetown University, 2012), 127.

⁷² *Sobranie opredelenii i postanovlenii sviashchennogo sobora pravoslavnoi Rossiiskoi tserkvi 1917-1918 gg.* (Moscow, 1918), 3–5.

greater material support for the clergy but resulted in greater participation of parishioners in the economic management of their churches.⁷³

The distinctions in *Edinoverie* parishes mostly came from the way in which they were formed. This process usually began with a group of Old Believers deciding to convert. They would then apply either to a missionary, the local bishop or the Synod itself for permission to create a parish. Typically, the bishop and the Synod requested proof that the new parish was financially sustainable, whether a new church was required and who would be the new priest. Once all this had been ascertained, the Synod would allow a new parish to be formed.⁷⁴ The initiative to form a *Edinoverie* parish could also come from above as well as below. The archbishop of Tver' in 1908 applied for permission to create a parish in his diocese in order to grant better coverage for the *edinovertsy* divided between the two churches of Torzhok and Rzhev.⁷⁵

This process of parish formation only applied if the bishops and the Synod found it necessary or possible to provide the converts with their own parish. If the numbers of converts were too few and there was an extant *Edinoverie* church relatively close by, then they would be joined to this parish. The result was that *Edinoverie* parishioners were often scattered in numerous villages that could be huge distances away from the church and in the midst of strong schismatic centres. Even in the relatively small central diocese of Tver', the Pokrovskaia church in Torzhok had parishioners in three villages that were between 45 and 100 versts distant. The 3,925 parishioners of the Troitsko-Nikol'skaia church in Ekaterinburg diocese were divided between seven settlements that were anywhere between 5 and 50 versts apart. Most unfortunate were the 6,122 parishioners of the Blagoveshchenskaia church in Tobol'sk. The parish was constituted of 63 different settlements, none closer than 55 versts and some as remote as 485. Given that Siberia was home to the vast majority of *edinovertsy*, travels of great distances must have been a

⁷³ The Milovskaia parish attained a guardianship in 1891. For its regulations, see *Ustav prikhodskogo popechitel'stva pri S.-Peterburgskoi edinovercheskoi nikolo-milovskoi tserkvi, chto v zakhar'evskoi ulitse*. (St. Petersburg, 1893). For parish guardianships in general, see G. Young, "Into Church Matters: Lay Identity, Rural Parish Life, and Popular Politics in Late Imperial Russia," *Russian History* 23, no. 1–4 (1996): 367–84.

⁷⁴ For a typical example, see the foundation of a parish in Omsk diocese between 1911 and 1913: RGIA, f. 796, op. 193, d. 1853.

⁷⁵ RGIA, f. 796, op. 189, d. 7950, ll. 3–4ob.

regular occurrence for both parishioners and priests.⁷⁶ In 1842, two *Edinoverie* priests of the Nizhnii Tagil parishes reported travelling 6,174 versts in a year between them.⁷⁷

The *edinovertsy* were not alone in this. Many Orthodox parishioners were equally remote from their churches.⁷⁸ However, the problems inherent with this situation were more severe for the *edinoversty*. Neither the bishop nor the *Edinoverie* priest would be able to afford them much in the way of protection from vengeful or beguiling former co-religionists in their village. *Edinoverie* priests too would have found this problematic since even the emoluments offered by these distant parishioners would have hardly offset the costs of travel. In Tomsk, several outlying communities were attached to the city church. However, the priest did not possess the funds to travel. Equally, his urban parishioners ‘always look on the travel [of the priest] to village parishes with great dissatisfaction and even petulance’ because they supported the church materially whilst the rural groups did not.⁷⁹ There was thus no incentive to serve or supervise these distant believers. Under such conditions, it would have been most difficult to foster any sense of union with the Orthodox Church beyond the most abstract of levels.

How difficult that task was can be seen in relations between *Edinoverie* and Orthodox parishioners. They ranged from cordial to outright enmity. For their part, Orthodox believers rarely reported complaints against the *edinovertsy*. This is due to several factors. For one, the *edinovertsy* were so few and so scattered that interaction was seldom intensive. The rules of Platon also served to limit contact. Prior to 1881, the Orthodox were forbidden from attending *Edinoverie* churches for the sacraments. Another point was the confessionalised perspective of many writers, for whom Orthodoxy was the ideal to which the *edinovertsy* had to strive. It was not in the interests of their viewpoint to suggest the *edinovertsy* were persecuted or rejected by Orthodox communities. There was also a desire to portray the Orthodox as being more ritually tolerant and therefore less inclined to dispute ritual matters.

Arguments, where they were recorded, typically revolved around the possession of churches or chapels. A chapel in Perm’ diocese was the subject of dispute between two

⁷⁶ *Spravochnaia kniga*, 450–451; *Adres-kalendar’*, 122; *Tobol’skii eparkhialnyi adres-kalendar’*, 227–228.

⁷⁷ Varushkin, “O edinoverii,” no. I (1867): 271.

⁷⁸ For the problems of distance created by the vast size of the Omsk diocese, see A. Friesen, “Building Orthodox Communities Outside Mother Russia: Church and Colonization in Omsk Diocese, 1885–1917” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Alberta, 2013), 64–114.

⁷⁹ V. P., “K voprosu,” 10.

parishes, one *Edinoverie* and one Orthodox. The *edinovertsy* asserted the right to exclusive use over it whilst the Orthodox suggested a compromise solution that the *edinovertsy* could have access whenever they liked, apart from two holy days a year.⁸⁰ This case, among others, suggests both that the Orthodox were willing to reach compromises whilst the *edinovertsy* were more interested in asserting the exclusive right of access over church buildings.⁸¹

Such was a common pattern. Many of the *edinovertsy*, especially those who had been coerced into joining, maintained their old views on the Nikonian ritual as heretical and thus tried to keep their churches free from the stain of sin that Orthodox believers brought with them. In 1906, the bishop of Perm' reported that he had allowed the *edinovertsy* and Old Believers of one town to use an Orthodox cemetery church for their services: 'the *edinovertsy* and Old Believers, zealously defending the integrity of their rituals, cannot agree that in one and the same church the liturgy is performed by the *Edinoverie* or the Orthodox ritual, although at different times: more than this, it seems shameful [to them] that their priest serves by the *Edinoverie* ritual and then in the Orthodox church by the Orthodox one.'⁸² In the Tomsk town of Sibiriachikhi, the *edinovertsy* declared the Nikonian rites to be 'a pinch of tobacco' (*tabachnaia shchepot'*): in other words, heretical. Thus, 'when anyone from the Orthodox, unacquainted with the local order, enters into a [*Edinoverie*] church, they make a ruckus and drive him from the church to the gate.'⁸³

Despite these examples, the relations of the *edinovertsy* with the Orthodox were not necessarily negative. In Nizhnii Tagil, the *edinovertsy* donated money to the Church, let their children study together with the Orthodox, allowed their children to marry Orthodox partners, and had those marriages performed by Orthodox priests. The *edinovertsy* 'relate to them [the Orthodox] in the spirit of Christian love, neighbourliness and respect.'⁸⁴ However, these kinds of reports are rare compared to those detailing *Edinoverie*

⁸⁰ The Synod sided with the Orthodox parish in 1909. RGIA, f. 796, op. 190, VI otd., 3 st., d. 76, ll. 8 - 9ob.

⁸¹ In 1871, a group of Cossack Old Believers in the Don diocese applied to join *Edinoverie* and suggested they be given the Orthodox church in their encampment. The Orthodox were not opposed in principle but reported that the prospective converts had threatened to forbid them entry to the church once it was turned into a *Edinoverie* one. Lysogorskii, *Edinoverie na Donu*, 637-646.

⁸² RGIA, f. 796, op. 187, d. 7074, l. 4ob.

⁸³ V. Iunovidov, "Kratkii ocherk sostoianiia raskola i edinoveriia v Altaiskoi, Anuiskoi, Aleiskoi, Shimanaevskoi, Vladimirskoi i Bobrovskoi volostiakh Biiskogo okruga," *Tomskie eparkhial'nye vedomosti*, no. 1 (1887): 3-4.

⁸⁴ Varushkin, "O edinoverii," II (1867): 37.

intolerance. Thus there was some truth behind the argument that the *edinovertsy* had failed to accept the relative insignificance of ritual. In terms of religious identity, these incidents suggest that a great many *edinovertsy* had left the schism only in the name. They were not willing to engage with the Orthodox and evidently maintained the schismatic belief that the rituals of the Russian Church were heretical.

Who were these parishioners? In social terms, they exclusively came from the peasantry, the petty townspeople and the merchants. The latter group formed the economic elite of *Edinoverie*, providing the funds for church construction and their subsequent beautification.⁸⁵ In Kazan', a parish was formed in 1861 at the behest of Andrei Poduruev, a merchant of the first guild.⁸⁶ Two women of the merchant estate, Ekaterina Iur'eva and Nadezhda Avdeeva, founded the Ural'sk Pokrovskii convent in 1881.⁸⁷ Merchants also functioned as the leaders of *Edinoverie* in some dioceses. The *Edinoverie* council formed in Moscow in 1864-5 to oversee the transformation of male almshouse of the priestless Preobrazhenskii cemetery into the Nikol'skii *Edinoverie* monastery was formed of several *Edinoverie* merchants, all having the rank of 'honoured citizen'.⁸⁸ The merchants of Nizhnii Novgorod played the predominant role in writing a petition in favour of reforming the rules of Platon in 1877, a fact that led Professor Nil'skii to sneer that the inconsistencies in the document were due to its composers being too busy at the Great Fair to pay proper attention.⁸⁹

The Monasteries

When the monk Nikodim converted to *Edinoverie* in 1784, he brought his monastery in Chernigov with him. Only two years later, at the request of Prince Potemkin, a stone monastery was built in Tauride diocese. Their number continued to grow in the nineteenth century, reaching 16 (eight monasteries and eight convents) by 1908. At this

⁸⁵ The only noble *edinoverets* I have found was Prince Aleksei Ukhtomskii, an elder of the Nikol'skaia church in Petersburg from 1912. P. Chubarov and V. N. Pavlov, "Akademik A. A. Ukhtomskii - prikhozhanin nikol'skogo edinovercheskoi tserkvi Sankt-Peterburga," in *Pravoslavnoe Edinoverie v Rossii* (St Petersburg, 2004), 65-67.

⁸⁶ Kaurkin and Pavlova, *Edinoverie v Rossii*, 111.

⁸⁷ L. I. Denisov, ed., *Pravoslavnye monastyri Rossiiskoi imperii* (Moscow, 1908), 879.

⁸⁸ TsIAM., f. 1181, op. 1, d.2; *Ob otkrytii nikol'skogo edinoverchskogo monastyria. Istoricheskaia zapiska*. (Moscow, 1892), 21.

⁸⁹ I. F. Nil'skii, *Otzyv ordinarnogo professora S.-Peterburgskoi dukhovnoi akademii Nil'skogo po povodu proshenii edinoveritsev sviateishemu sinodu o nuzhdakh edinoveriia* (St Petersburg, 1878), 2.

point, there were 99 monks, 157 nuns and 600 novices of both genders.⁹⁰ Their locations reflected the concentrations of the *Edinoverie* population: Chernigov had three, Nizhnii Novgorod two, and the Urals five. Despite the relatively small number of *edinovertsy* present in Moscow, it had a monastery and a convent.

The most important one was the Nikol'skii monastery in Moscow. Founded in 1865 to house the prominent converts from the Belaia Krinitsa hierarchy, Metropolitan Filaret (Drozdov) decided to place it directly in the heart of the Preobrazhenskoe priestless Old Believer cemetery. That the buildings he suggested were already occupied did not faze him. The fragile reason offered was that one of the churches had already been seized and therefore most of the residents had converted (which was not the case).⁹¹ Thus the Old Believers were promptly evicted from the male almshouse and were moved to the female almshouse just down the street. The only comfort that they could muster was that they managed to take all of their old icons with them. A rumour circulated that, on the transfer of the icons, the Old Believers 'saw divine grace, in the form of a fire, leave from the men's chapel and move to the women's court.'⁹²

We possess remarkably little information about what monastic life in these institutions was like. In terms of economic life, it would seem they were poor, at least in comparison to the larger Orthodox monasteries. Treasury payments were small (the Uspenskii monastery only received 799 roubles and 26 kopeks a year) and it seems doubtful that they would have attracted a great number of pilgrims.⁹³ As P. N. Zyrianov has commented, 'all of them were visited by a comparatively small number of believers. *Edinoverie* could not attract any sizeable quantity of Old Believers.'⁹⁴ Even the Nikol'skii monastery was reliant on an annual subsidy from the *Edinoverie* typography to make ends meet. One writer, describing the Zlatoustovskii monastery in Ufa diocese, pinned down one potential reason. The monks were nearly all old men whilst the novices were often scarcely more than boys, training in the old ritual in order to become clergy in *Edinoverie* churches. The result was that that the monastery was deprived of any 'working hands.'⁹⁵

⁹⁰ Data compiled from the information in Denisov, *Pravoslavnye monastyri*. Numbers for monks and male novices are somewhat distorted because the Zlatoustovskii monastery in Ufa did not distinguish between monks and novices.

⁹¹ The priest sent to investigate found 33 residents, 5 of whom were *edinovertsy*. TsIAM, f. 1181, op. 1, d. 2, ll. 9, 18.

⁹² Ibid., l. 112.

⁹³ Denisov, *Pravoslavnye monastyri* 328.

⁹⁴ P. N. Zyrianov, *Russkie monastyri i monashetvo v XIX i nachale XX veka*. (Moscow, 2002), 95.

⁹⁵ S. I. Matveev, *Kratkaia istoriia zlatoustovskogo voskresenskogo edinovercheskogo muzhskogo monastyria, ufimskoi gubernii, zlatoustovskogo uezda*. (1913), 2.

In other words, the monastery did not produce any handicrafts or produce to sell to visitors and to sustain itself. Another author ruefully opined that the monastery ‘did not justify all the hopes placed on it upon its establishment [...], it did not have any especial importance in the successful conversion of schismatics.’⁹⁶

As this statement suggests, *Edinoverie* monasteries were expected to have a missionary role. They served as surveillance outposts among the Old Believers. A. D. Stolypin, the ataman of the Ural'sk Cossack host, once declared that ‘if we manage to build a [*Edinoverie*] monastery, then the [Old Believer] sketes will destroy themselves because adjacency with a monastery will be impossible for them: a monastery by the sketes will be better than the police.’⁹⁷ The idea of the monasteries functioning as schools for the *Edinoverie* clergy gained currency only at the beginning of the twentieth century as reformers began focussing on ways to improve the condition of the *Edinoverie* priests and create institutions capable of providing them with the unique skills that they required (namely knowledge of the pre-Nikonian liturgy). Some of the monasteries and convents did have parish schools under their aegis: the Vsekhsviatskii convent in Vladimir had a girls’ school with 55 pupils in attendance by 1908.⁹⁸

To end this discussion, it is pertinent to ask whether the monastic institutions ever exerted anything like a leadership role amongst the *edinovertsy* similar to that played by those of the Basilian Order among the Uniates.⁹⁹ The almost complete lack of discussion about them would seem to suggest no. Even after 1905, they were a peripheral issue in the otherwise wide ranging debates. Perhaps their poverty and the small number of monastics prevented them from taking the centre stage. Nevertheless, the monasteries and convents provided another way in which the *edinovertsy* could be compartmentalised away from other Orthodox believers. They also further institutionalised the ritual difference that, at least according to Platon, was supposed to disappear once God had enlightened the new converts about the flaws in their rites.

The Typography

⁹⁶ Chernavskii, *Orenburgskaia eparkhiia*, 1901, vyp. X: 410.

⁹⁷ V. N. Vitebskii, *Raskol’ v ural’skom voiske i otnoshenie k nemu dukhovnoi i voennograzhdanskoi vlasti v kontse XVIII i v XIX v.* (Kazan, 1878), 129.

⁹⁸ Denisov, *Pravoslavnye monastyri*, 116.

⁹⁹ B. Skinner, *The Eastern Church Between Poland and Russia: Identity and Conflict in the Era of Partition* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2009), 66–69.

In 1818, a *Edinoverie* typography was founded in Moscow.¹⁰⁰ Under the care of the clergy of the Troitskaia *Edinoverie* church by the Saltykov bridge, its purpose was to reprint the old liturgical books from the seventeenth century.¹⁰¹ It was kept under strict control by the Synod. Yearly accounts of the books proposed for printing had to be sent to Petersburg for assent, a practice that continued even after the relaxing of censorship laws in the 1860s and 1905. The main customers of this institution were not *edinovertsy* but Old Believers. This was for several reasons. Firstly, the Old Believers were not only prohibited from printing books, they were also forbidden from owning or buying ones that did not come from the typography.¹⁰² Secondly, the massive campaign of property seizure conducted under Nicholas I (and afterwards) meant that the *edinovertsy* themselves were rarely short of old books. As with icons, prayer houses and monastery buildings, the *edinovertsy* were usually the recipients of this destructive form of religious coercion.¹⁰³

This gave the Synod a way in which it could indirectly extend limited control over the books that Old Believers read. However, it rendered the typography entirely dependent on the government's policy to Old Believers and the relations that Old Believers had with the *edinovertsy*. In the 1870s, this worked out quite favourably. Protohierarch Zvezdinskii, the senior priest of the Troitskaia church, reached an amicable understanding with Archbishop Antonii (Shutov), the Belaia Krinitsa hierarch of Moscow. The prelate ordered all the Old Believer churches under his authority to buy books from the typography whilst Zvezdinskii would informally consult Antonii over which seventeenth book would be used as the model for the copies.¹⁰⁴ This resulted in considerable sales since the Old Believers had to replace the books they had lost from half a century of plundering. The riches gained turned the Troitskaia church into one of the wealthiest *Edinoverie* temples in Russia and a source of funding not only for the *Edinoverie*

¹⁰⁰ A. I. V. Pochinskaia, "Iz istorii organizatsii edinovercheskoi tipografii v Moskve," in *Ural'skii sbornik. Istoriia. Kul'tura. Religiiia*. vol. 4, (Ekaterinburg, 2001), 143–51.

¹⁰¹ The books produced were quite impressive in terms of sheer numbers. In 1850, it printed 3600 Psalters, in 1852, 36,000 various theological tracts and in 1860, 12,800 books. See M. S., *Istoricheskii ocherk*, 147, footnote 2.

¹⁰² The sale or purchase of Old Believer religious books and pamphlets could land the repeat offender in jail for two to four months. Ia. A. Kantorovich, *O raskol'nikakh: svod zakonov rossiiskoi imperii* (St. Petersburg, 1901), 23–24.

¹⁰³ P. I. Ivanov, "Izdevatel'stva nad edinovertsami. (Udivitel'naia istorii edinovercheskoi tipografii)," *Tserkov'*, no. 11 (1909): 376.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 377.

churches of the capital but also for Orthodox schools.¹⁰⁵ It also made it a tempting target for others: Pavel Prusskii launched a campaign in 1879 to have the typography transferred to the Nikol'skii monastery.¹⁰⁶ The attempt failed. Pavel had to be satisfied with the order that the typography provide his monastery and Subbotin's Brotherhood of St. Petr the Metropolitan with yearly subsidies.¹⁰⁷ When the 1905 October Manifesto granted the Old Believers freedom of the press, the predictable happened. The profits of the typography fell precipitously, leading its overseers to unsuccessfully protest the stipends it was doling out to the Nikol'skii monastery and the Brotherhood.¹⁰⁸ Thus, the financial situation of *Edinoverie*'s leading monastery and its Moscow churches was not only dependent on relations with the Old Believers but in fact had an intimate interest in seeing that repressive policies against the schism continue.

Other Institutions

Other *Edinoverie* institutions were much more localised in character. Like Orthodox parishes, they had almshouses for succour of the poor and schools for the education of the young.¹⁰⁹ The Troitskaia church school in Moscow was opened in 1863 through the generous donations of one Ivan Ryzhkov, a wealthy merchant and overseer of the typography. He was guided by the laudable aim of the 'importance of popular education on the one hand and, on the other, delivering the opportunity of study to children of poor parents without distinction [in regards to] their religious views.'¹¹⁰ This guiding principle meant that education was free and a dormitory was provided for some of the poorer students.¹¹¹ Between 1847 and 1860, 17 schools were opened in various parishes surrounding Nizhnii Tagil. They had taught 3,810 students in these years and the program included literacy, the catechism, basic Christian history and handwriting.¹¹² Basic schooling in *Edinoverie* parishes and monasteries seems to have become widespread by

¹⁰⁵ For a list of those institutions that benefited from the typography's largesse, see N. I. Gorlitsyn, *Otchet nachal'nogo troitskogo edinovercheskogo uchilishcha v Moskve s 1864 g. po 1878 g.* (Moscow, 1879), 1–2. A parish founded in Penza in 1868 also received a promise for books, money and liturgical equipment at the typography's expense. I. Nevestin, "Raskol' v sele Poime i uchrezhdenie edinoveriia," *Penzenskie eparkhial'nye vedomosti*, no. 12 (1868): 395.

¹⁰⁶ RGIA, f. 796, op. 187, d. 7011

¹⁰⁷ 6,000 roubles went to the monastery and 1,000 to the Brotherhood. Ivanov states that 162,000 and 27,000 went to each respectively between 1881 and 1907. Ivanov, "Izdevatel'stva," 377.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 379; For the difficulties the typography was having meeting its financial obligations to the Troitskaia parish school, see *Trudy Moskovskogo edinovercheskogo s'ezda*, 27.

¹⁰⁹ As an example see *Ustav bogadel'ni A. A. Sandalina pokrovskoi Molvitinskoi edinovercheskoi tserkvi v sele Molvitine, Buiskogo uezda, Kostromskoi gubernii*, 1900.

¹¹⁰ Gorlitsyn, *Otchet*, 2.

¹¹¹ M. S., *Istoricheskii ocherk*, 108; *Tobol'skii eparkhialnyi adres-Kalendar'*, 224–225.

¹¹² Varushkin, "O edinoverii," II (1868), 25–28.

the end of nineteenth century. The first two decades of the twentieth saw the emergence of the first secondary schools in Petersburg and Moscow and a psalmist school in Perm', all with the aim of better educating the next generation of *Edinoverie* clergy.¹¹³

Ritual

Of all the factors that separated *Edinoverie* from Orthodoxy, the ritual dimension was undoubtedly the most important. What did the *Edinoverie* liturgy look like? Most *Edinoverie* churches observed the same practices found among the Old Believers: using two instead of three fingers to bless themselves and be blessed, proceeding around the church against the direction of sun, using eight, rather than seven, pieces of prosphora bread in the Eucharist, and singing the hallelujahs twice and not thrice. Minor grammatical differences were present in incantations recited by the priest, most famously in the words spoken at the end of the service '*i vo veki vekom*' (forever and ever): the Orthodox books instead proscribed '*i vo veki vekov*.' The *edinovertsy* made use of a small cushion, a *podruchnik* or *kovrik*, to keep the hands and faces of worshippers clean during prostrations. The Orthodox bishops had to bless the *Edinoverie* antimensia, a decorated cloth placed on the altar during the service, by the old rites. When possible, the *edinovertsy* preferred an antimensia to come from the period prior to Nikon's tenure as Patriarch. V. M. Skvortsov, describing the services held during the first National *Edinoverie* Congress in 1912, noted that 'since the *edinovertsy* do not allow electrical lighting in their churches, the prayers here were conducted in semi-darkness.'¹¹⁴ Prince Aleksei Ukhtomskii, also speaking at the 1912 congress, argued that a major difference that everyone would spot was the length of the *Edinoverie* service since it was supposed to be much longer than the Orthodox one.¹¹⁵ As minor as so many of these issues seem to be, a failure to observe them or an attempt to alter them could provoke the *edinovertsy* into opposition: 'every movement and every word of the pastor is subordinated to strict control. The smallest omission or an insignificant change in the ritual by a priest: all of this is noted by the *edinovertsy* and brings forth censure and accusations of heresy from them.'¹¹⁶

The most obvious dissimilarity with Orthodox ritual, and therefore one of the most contentious, was in the form of singing practised. Most *edinovertsy* preferred *znamennoe*

¹¹³ For analysis of these institutions, see chapter VI.

¹¹⁴ Skvortsov, *Pervyi Vserossiiskii*, 14.

¹¹⁵ *Pervyi Vserossiiskii s'ezd pravoslavnykh staroobriadtsev (edinoveritsev)* (St. Petersburg, 1912), 87.

¹¹⁶ Iunovidov, "Kratkii ocherk," 4.

chanting, a form of unison, melismatic liturgical singing. Not only did it differ in sound from polyphonic Orthodox music, it also used the so-called hook notes (*kriukovaia notatsiia*), a medieval Russian system of music notation. Attempts to change this singing were often a cause of tension between clergy and parishioners. Protophierarchy Dobrovol'skii caused an uproar in 1878 when he tried to introduce the Orthodox form of singing in his church in Warsaw diocese: 'the zealots of the old piety undertook an entire war which fell wholly on the head of the poor deacon who was, after this, forced to transfer to another position.'¹¹⁷ A later priest of the same parish brought in a *Edinoverie* choirmaster to simply improve standards. This resulted in some *edinovertsy* saying "all your children are being taught Orthodox singing. Farewell tradition!"¹¹⁸ Strict adherence to the singing was far from unproblematic. Few choirmasters knew the hook notes and they might not be able or willing to teach *Edinoverie* choirs to use them properly. They were legendarily difficult for singers raised on western notes to grasp. One *Edinoverie* choirmaster stated that although his pupils enjoyed the challenge, they found the process similar 'to studying a Chinese grammar.'¹¹⁹

However, there was also a tremendous amount of local variation in *Edinoverie* ritual. The possession of a single centralised typography never resulted in the establishment of a uniform liturgy. This may have been because of the policy of distributing seized books among the *edinovertsy*. Since they rarely had reason to turn to the typography, they used seventeenth and eighteenth century copies of books first printed in 'the time of the first five Russian patriarchs.' This lack of uniformity meant that it was not just Orthodox priests who could feel the wrath of their parishioners for ritual changes. If a *Edinoverie* priest transferred from one diocese to another and tried to introduce a different form of *Edinoverie* ritual, he too would be in deep trouble. An interesting example is the dispute that occurred in Moscow in 1878. Father Ioann Zvezdinskii, arriving from Tver' diocese, tried to introduce the practice of administering the sacraments to communicants with three holy spoons (*lzhitsy*) rather than one, a practice that had been accepted in his old parish. Georgii Vozdvizhenskii, another priest at the Troitskaia church, 'considered it contrary to his duty and his conscience to allow this innovation in the Troitskaia church' and so an acrimonious battle was spawned between the supporters of the two priests as

¹¹⁷ Nikol'skii, *Shestidesiatletie 1843-1903*, 22.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 42-43.

¹¹⁹ *Vtoroi Vserossiiskii s'ezd*, 107.

each vied to gain the support of the Metropolitan.¹²⁰ As hard as they tried, neither group could find anything definitive in their favour in the pre-Nikonian books. The matter became ugly as accusations flew of wanting to abolish the thanksgiving to the imperial family at the end of the service. Those who preferred the one spoon won out: however, a petition from the late 1880s reveals that advocacy of the three spoons died hard as senior members of the church and the typography continued to press for the change, which they cast as following ‘the example of the *Edinoverie* churches not only of the city of Moscow but of all Russia.’¹²¹

Such arguments were only propelled onwards by the existence of the electoral principle. The issue of ritual and authority in the parish thus became intimately intertwined as individuals bidding for power cast themselves as defenders of an older ritual form truer to the spirit of *Edinoverie*. The Moscow case became particularly bitter because it involved the typography. One of the first actions of Father Zvezdinskii’s supporters was to try and have Vozdvizhenskii removed from his position as clerical overseer of the typography. Ritual was so interwoven with other aspects of parish life that it became impossible to distinguish the two. The problem was that the Synod and local prelates had no real way of solving the dispute. There was no ideal blueprint of the *Edinoverie* liturgy to check practices against. No less important were the various pronouncements insisting that the bishops strictly maintain the *Edinoverie* liturgical order. Whichever side lost the debate could claim that the bishop was violating the existing legislation governing *Edinoverie*, placing the hierarchs at a considerable disadvantage no matter whom they chose to support.

The *Edinoverie* liturgy and its attendant rituals were instant markers of distinction between Orthodoxy and *Edinoverie*. It is also an area in which the *edinovertsy* and Old Believers, especially the priestly, had a great deal in common. All of the institutions I have noted in this section existed to maintain and perpetuate the old ritual, thus ending any possibility of Platon (Levshin’s) pious hope that time and the grace of God would reveal to the *edinovertsy* the errors inherent within these ‘uncorrected’ rites. The Church itself had to realise this. Any assault on the old rituals was taken as an assault on *Edinoverie* itself and they thereby caused extreme discord between Orthodoxy and the *edinovertsy*. However, regional diversity and a lack of any attempt to create a uniform

¹²⁰ “Po povodu novovvedenie v nekotorykh edinovercheskikh tserkvakh,” *Moskovskie eparkhial’nye vedomosti*, no. 4 (1878): 46.

¹²¹ GARF, f. 1099, op. 1, d. 938, l. 1.

liturgy prior to 1905 meant that the rituals were just as much a force for division among the *edinovertsy* themselves. It could provoke endless squabbling and become intermeshed with other parish problems to produce truly embittered infighting. The bishops and the Synod could only intervene with extreme caution. They had no instant way of distinguishing a ‘correct’ ritual from an ‘innovation,’ even though they were compelled by law to prevent the latter from disturbing the liturgical order. Thus, rituals not only helped separate the *edinovertsy* from the Orthodox but also further helped further divisions within *Edinoverie* itself, encouraging the emergence of many local ‘*Edinoveries*’ rather than one coherent movement.

The reason that changes to the rituals could have such drastic consequences was because they were a core tenet of identity. The *edinovertsy* defined themselves through the use of the old books, the two fingered sign of the cross and their peculiar style of singing: consequently, changes were not just alterations to liturgical minutiae but challenges to how *edinovertsy* located themselves in the constellation of Orthodoxy and the various forms of Old Belief. The investment of identity in the rites demonstrates that the *edinovertsy* continued to identify themselves as members of *staroobriadchestvo*, as adherents of the old rites. This may explain why a significant number of *edinovertsy* continued to maintain more affinity with the Old Believers than they did with the Orthodox. Certainly, among some *edinovertsy* there was a theological commitment to Russian Orthodoxy and its claim to canonical legitimacy. They might even concede Nikonian rituals were legitimate, so long as they themselves were not forced to endure them. However, that theological commitment was always predicated on the Church’s willingness to allow the old rites. The institutionalisation of ritual by the Platonic rules thus ensured the preservation of a sense of belonging to Old Belief.

Facing Old Belief

Within this section, I approach the issue of conversion. This is intended only as a preliminary foray into the basic background. A more intensive discussion of the problems of conversion as a category and its relation to confessional identity can be found in the next chapter.

Conversions

The statistics produced by the ober-procurators of the Holy Synod on conversion rates to *Edinoverie* are deeply flawed and must be used with caution. Nevertheless, some interesting trends can be noted within the figures. Firstly, they help to demonstrate the

impact that Nicholas I's persecution of Old Belief had on *Edinoverie*. Throughout his reign, the number of conversions per year never dropped below 2000: they reached their all time height in 1836 with 30,764 new *edinovertsy*. We can see the direct effect of the law of 1854 which forced Old Believer merchants to join either Orthodoxy or *Edinoverie* or face losing their guild status: the figure jumps from 2,127 in 1853 to 7,410 in 1854 and 8,257 in 1855. However, after 1861, the number of conversions slowed considerably. It took until 1892 to rise above 2,000.¹²² These numbers show the importance of state support of *Edinoverie* and also helps us to understand why the restructuring to *Edinoverie* began to gain momentum from the 1860s. The decline in conversions demonstrated that *Edinoverie* had to be made more attractive to Old Believers if it was to maintain its earlier successes without relying on the vengeful hand of the sovereign and his state.

Another pattern emerges when one compares the conversions to *Edinoverie* with those to Orthodoxy. Shleev, using data from Lebedev and others, compared the average number of conversions per year for the reigns of Nicholas I, Alexander II and Alexander III. Under Nicholas, the conversions to Orthodoxy averaged at 6,205 a year compared to 6,339 to *Edinoverie*; under Alexander II, the rate was 2,294 to 2,172; and under Alexander III, it was 5,421 to 1,892.¹²³ The figures show that *Edinoverie*, the most innovative weapon the Church devised to fight the schism, ultimately proved no more popular among the Old Believers than the Church proper and indeed was significantly less so in the reign of Alexander III, an era when *Edinoverie* took on renewed significance and coercion revived.

Was *Edinoverie* more popular among the priestly or priestless Old Believers? Again, we lack sufficient statistical evidence to reach any definite conclusions. The data we do possess for isolated instances indicate that there was no significant difference. In Viatka in 1909, the conversions were equally spread between the *popovtsy* and *bespopovtsy*: 26 from each joined *Edinoverie* in that year.¹²⁴ Logically, one would expect that the Church would target priestly rather than priestless Old Believers since the latter were more theologically distant. However, this was not the case. Both the Moscow *edinovertsy* and Filaret (Drozdov) believed that the new Nikol'skii monastery would be more effective in the priestless community: 'a more appropriate place than the male court of the Preobrazhenskoe almshouse for the *Edinoverie* monastery cannot be found in

¹²² All figures from Kaurkin and Pavlova, *Edinoverie v Rossii*, 165.

¹²³ (Shleev), *Edinoverie*, 9–10.

¹²⁴ *Viatskaia eparkhiia*, 28.

Moscow.¹²⁵ In 1880, one *Edinoverie* priest in the Don diocese suggested that a visit from Pavel Prusskii to his Cossack encampment would be useless: 'it is possible to [convert schismatics] with the priestly but in the parish of this church [...] the schismatics belong to the priestless sect.'¹²⁶ His colleagues and the bishop disagreed and Pavel was summoned anyway. It would seem therefore that the Church expected *Edinoverie* to be appealing to both general groups.

However, it is notable that church missionaries often cited different attitudes to *Edinoverie* within these two groups. Timofei Verkhovskii's travels around Starodub' are instructive. In many of the localities he visited, he was greeted warmly and *Edinoverie* was ultimately accepted by both priestly and priestless. Where he found problems were with a more stringent sect of the priestly Old Believers located in Voronok and Luzhok. They rejected communion even with the other Old Believer communities of the region, holding them to be heretics and apostates. When he arrived at Voronok and explained the will of Nicholas I that they convert, a drunken assembly told him that they 'were not and will not be apostates and among them there was not a single Judas: that had always been the case among them and always would be.'¹²⁷ In Luzhok, Verkhovskii found that the Old Believers had already gathered around their church to prevent his entry: fearing violence, he beat a swift retreat.¹²⁸ The appeal of *Edinoverie* in this case did not depend so much on the type of Old Belief but rather the strictness with which different communities held their faith.

The View from Old Belief

Aleksandr Palkin, in his analysis of Old Believer polemics from the 1790s to the 1840s, argues that 'Old Believers, not without basis, saw in *Edinoverie* the chief threat to their religious independence.'¹²⁹ Polemical literature emerged as a defence mechanism intended to safeguard Old Belief from apostasy: not surprisingly, the number of such manuscripts increased significantly in the reign of Nicholas I.¹³⁰ One such essay, produced by a *pomoretz* in Perm' in 1840 and widely distributed in V. Kel'siev's

¹²⁵ TsIAM, f. 1181, op. 1, d. 2, l. 5

¹²⁶ Lysogorskii, *Edinoverie na Donu*, 754.

¹²⁷ T. Verkhovskii, *Starodub'e. Zapiski prot. S.-Peterb. nikol'sk. edinoverchesk. tserkvi T. A. Verkhovskogo, vysochaishe komandirovannogo v 1845-1848 g. gosudarem imp. Nikolaem Pavlovichem dlia ustroistva edinoveriia v Chernigovsk. staroobriadchesk. posadakh.*, 1874, ch. 1, 163–164.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 169–172.

¹²⁹ A. S. Palkin, "'Ne soedinentsi, no podchinentsi...'. Otnoshenie staroobriadtssev k edinoveiiu v kontse XVIII - serdine XIX vv (po materialam polemicheskikh proizvedenii)," *Vestnik ekaterinburgskoi dukhovnoi seminarii*, no. 2 (4) (2012): 75.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 78.

collation of data on the schism, noted seven reasons why the Old Believers could not accept *Edinoverie*: the foundation of *Edinoverie* did not correspond to the rules of the ecumenical church; the anathemas of 1667 were still in force and thus the *edinovertsy* were in violation of them; the Synod continued to republish polemics from the eighteenth century that insulted the pre-Nikonian rituals; the *edinovertsy* did not follow the rituals of their bishops, thus violating the scriptures; the rules of Platon were constantly broken, especially that which forbade the Orthodox from attacking the old rite; *Edinoverie* relied on forcible coercion to fight Old Belief; and that there were two liturgical regulations within Orthodoxy, pre-Nikonian and post-Nikonian.¹³¹ Other sources demonstrate that this list had enduring popularity. The Belaia Krinitza hierarchy circulated a pamphlet making near identical claims in Tobol'sk in 1900.¹³²

The line of attack was two fold. Firstly, the aim was to prove that *Edinoverie* was in violation of the basic foundations of the Christian faith and consequently was heretical. Secondly, the Old Believers sought to paint Synodal Orthodoxy as hypocritical and untrustworthy. It consistently contradicted its own rules and thus *Edinoverie* was little more than 'the drag net by which the hierarchy hopes to catch Old Belief not for communion with them on conditions of equality but for the easy devouring of Old Belief by New Belief [i.e. Orthodoxy].'¹³³ The point therefore was not only to keep Old Believers away from *Edinoverie* but also to persuade those who had already converted of their sad position. It is not co-incidental that many of the points made by the Old Believers were the same which reform-minded *edinovertsy* made from the 1860s onwards. The Old Believers knew well about the problems of the *edinovertsy* and sought to exploit their dissatisfaction. The theological argumentation was an attempt to draw up more firmly the dividing line between Old Belief and *Edinoverie* by portraying the latter as heretical. On leaving Old Belief, the *edinovertsy* became heretics. Indeed, the *pomorets* L. V. Pichugin remarked in 1909 that their entire mental state changed: 'they become

¹³¹ V. Kel'siev, *Sbornik pravitel'stvennykh svedenii o raskol'nikakh*, vol. 1 (London, 1860), 199–208; Palkin, "Ne Soediniatsi, no podchinit'sia..." 79–80.

¹³² A. Shalabanov, "Vzgliady starobriadtse i pravoslavnogo na edinoverie," *Tobol'skie eparkhial'nye vedomosti*, no. 21, 22 (1900): 395–404, 447–56. Palkin has also shown that these views were still being propagated by priestless Old Believers in the 1890s. See A. S. Palkin, "Otnoshenie starobriadtsev pomorskogo soglasiia k edinoveriiu (na primere polemicheskikh sochinenii I. I. Zykova i D. V. Batova iz sobraniia drevlekhranilishcha LAI URFU)," in *Novye tekhnologii v informatsionno-bibliotechnom obespechenii nauchnykh issledovani* (Ekaterinburg, 2012), 372–76.

¹³³ V. Belikov, "K voprosu ob edinoverii," *Trudy Kievskoi dukhovnoi akademii*, no. 1 (1917): 4–5.

proud, arrogant and, like policemen, direct their activities to betraying anyone from the Old Believers to court or at least make slanders before officialdom.¹³⁴

Comparisons to the Catholic Uniate Church were also a frequent occurrence throughout *Edinoverie*'s existence.¹³⁵ Pichugin went a step further: 'the Russian Uniates, that is the *edinovertsy*, stand lower than their exemplar. At least the Polish Uniates have their own bishops, handed to them by the Roman pope: the Russian Uniates do not have their own bishops and this means, firstly, distrust from the side of the Russian ecclesiastical authorities and secondly that the *edinovertsy* are limited by the 16 articles [of Platon], further than which they cannot go a step.'¹³⁶ The intent of such a comparison was not simply to insult both the *edinovertsy* and the Orthodox through an unflattering comparison with a despised enemy. It was also to starkly divide heresy from Old Belief. On the side of the former was Catholicism, the Uniates, official Orthodoxy and *Edinoverie*, all of them opponents of the Church of Christ. On the other side stood Old Belief, alone in its maintenance of a pure Christian faith. Equally, Pichugin was no doubt aware of the controversy in *Edinoverie* over the issue of bishops, which was reaching fever pitch in 1909. Pointing out to the *edinovertsy* that the Orthodox refusal to grant them episcopal representation meant they were even lower than the Catholic Uniates had a missionary aim. It was a statement made in the hope of convincing the *edinovertsy* to return to the bosom of Old Belief.

All in all, the polemical literature reveals no ground for compromise. As one Orthodox observer said, 'so much venomous sarcasm, merciless irony and open malice flies from the mouths of the Old Believers on addressing *Edinoverie*.'¹³⁷ This was for three reasons. Firstly, the Old Believer polemicists needed to be as firm as possible in their rejection of *Edinoverie* to keep their own members from defecting. Secondly, they wanted to try and convince the *edinovertsy* to return. The best way to do so was to deny any possibility of reconciliation beyond flight from the Nikonians. The third was to construct a confessional border between *Edinoverie* and Old Belief. For the Old Believers, Orthodoxy and *Edinoverie* were both heresy. It was just that one form of the heresy happened to use the

¹³⁴ L. F. Pichugin, *O edinoverii v Russkoi tserkvi (uniia edinoveriia). Polemicheskii ocherk*. (Moscow, 2009), 21. It is unknown whether Pichugin published the essay in his lifetime. For a biography, see A. I. Samoilenko, "Lev Feoktistovich Pichugin i staroobriadtsy s. Poima penzenskoi oblasti," *Mir staroobriadchestva* 4: Zhivye traditsii: rezultaty i perspektivy kompleksnykh issledovaniy Russkogo staroobriadchestva (1998): 356–61.

¹³⁵ Palkin, "Ne soediniatsi, no podchiniatsi..." 82.

¹³⁶ Pichugin, *O edinoverii*, 39-40.

¹³⁷ Belikov, "K voprosu" 4.

two-fingered sign of the cross. There could be no possible moderation when it came to dealing with the enemies of the true Church. *Edinoverie* was placed firmly outside Old Belief and within the camp of the official Church. What is also noticeable is that these pamphlets differ little, despite the fact that they emerged from distinct Old Believer concords. Their authors rarely attacked the members of different priestly or priestless groups.¹³⁸ The construction of a confessional border with *Edinoverie* gave Old Belief something of an idealised homogenous character. The real dividing line between Orthodoxy and heresy lay not within Old Belief but outside it. The Synod, Subbotin and later Simeon Shleev treated the points of Old Believer criticism much like a shopping list, ticking them off via concessions that were intended to increase *Edinoverie*'s appeal. However, this was a fundamental misunderstanding. These points were not conditions for the acceptance of *Edinoverie*. Rather, they were proofs of the more fundamental fact that the Nikonian Church was heretical. Reforms of *Edinoverie* would thus do little to undermine the main reason why the Old Believers refused to come into union with the Church.

Living Together, Believing Apart

The interactions between Old Believers and *edinovertsy* do not follow any general pattern of outright hostility, grudging acceptance, or harmonious co-existence. Each instance is dependent on local traditions, the circumstances in which *Edinoverie* was founded, the personalities involved, and the variant of Old Belief present.

The uncompromising position forwarded in the polemical literature did not stop some Old Believers from seeking rapprochement with the Church. The Belaia Krinitza hierarchy's 1862 *Circular Epistle* made clear that this schismatic concord was willing to concede that Orthodoxy was not of the Anti-Christ. So controversial was this that it caused a break in the hierarchy's ranks but it was nevertheless the policy carried out by the *okruzhniki* until 1917. Nor were Old Believers necessarily against limited discussions with the *edinovertsy* and the Orthodox about possible reunification. A group of *chasovennoe* priestless Old Believers participated in the 1912 National *Edinoverie* Congress, offering commentary on those reforms that were most likely to bridge the schism.¹³⁹ As we will see in chapter VI,

¹³⁸ Pichugin does briefly blame the *beglopopovtsy* for *Edinoverie*'s emergence: had their priests not been so immoral and criminal, then *Edinoverie* would never have been seen a viable solution in the first place. Pichugin, *O edinoverii*, 10.

¹³⁹ Skvortsov, *Pervyi Vserossiiskii edinovercheskii s''ezd*, 38: 42.

negotiations were held with the Belaia Krinitza hierarchy and the *beglopovttsy* in 1906, 1912 and 1917 to see if common ground could be found.

Secondly, the *edinovttsy* lived alongside Old Believers, which meant that there would necessarily be interaction, some of it religious in nature. In Nizhnii Tagil, it was noted that the *edinovttsy* and Old Believers together continued to observe the cult of the founder of the schism in the area, a fact that suggests the *edinovttsy* maintained links to the past that they shared with the schismatics.¹⁴⁰ In 1872, Old Believers, *edinovttsy* and Orthodox all participated in an icon procession in famine-stricken Ural'sk in a collective prayer for rain and respite from a cholera epidemic: 'at this time, no one thought about ritual differences, all were occupied by the single design, the single prayer 'Give rain to the thirsty earth, oh Saviour!''¹⁴¹

Thirdly, the Church itself provided institutional bases where the Old Believers could meet with the *edinovttsy*. We have already met the Moscow typography, which not only led to trade relations with the Old Believers but also inadvertently engendered financial dependency. Schools and almshouses could also function in a similar way. The Troitskaia school in Moscow allowed Old Believers to study there so that it could serve as a 'link to the reconciliation [of the Old Believers] with the official church.'¹⁴² Indeed, of the 900 pupils to pass through the gates between 1864 and 1879, 300 were Old Believers.¹⁴³ Some writers also noted that Old Believers would often attend the first liturgies to be held in new *Edinoverie* churches: some did so out of curiosity but others to begin their path towards conversion.¹⁴⁴ *Edinoverie* parishes were expected to function as missionary camps so the presence of *Edinoverie* churches and chapels in the very heart of Old Believer communities was considered advantageous.

However, the attitude of the Church towards the relationship that the *edinovttsy* maintained with their former co-religionists was ultimately ambiguous. Thus, whilst the Synod did offer some opportunity for Old Believers and *edinovttsy* to live and interact together, it also regarded close relations with the schism as a cause for alarm. When a group of Arkhangel'sk priestless asked for a new *Edinoverie* parish, the Synod stipulated

¹⁴⁰ Varushkin, "O edinoverii," no. I, (1866): 15–17. Varushkin notes that the *edinovttsy* attempted to rewrite the history of this holy man by casting him either as a remarkably tolerant Orthodox missionary or as someone who would have converted to Orthodoxy had *Edinoverie* existed in the mid eighteenth century.

¹⁴¹ Vitebskii, *Raskol' v ural'skom Voiske*, 201–202.

¹⁴² Gorlitsyn, *Otchet*, 2–3.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 6.

¹⁴⁴ Nevestin, "Raskol' v sele Poime," no. 12 (1868): 394.

that it be placed as close as possible to an Orthodox church in order to ensure that the converts could be kept under close supervision.¹⁴⁵ Equally, bishops were cautious about confirming the election of priests who had been former schismatic ministers: the priests of the new parishes would be fundamental in keeping the new *edinovertsy* under the watchful eye of the prelate. In 1878, a Belaia Krinita hierarch and his flock in Orenburg expressed the desire to convert to *Edinoverie* on the condition that their former prelate was ordained as a *Edinoverie* priest. However, because he had fled from his place of exile in Vologda, the Orthodox bishop judged him to be untrustworthy and refused his candidacy, complicating the conversion of one hundred schismatics.¹⁴⁶

There was also the matter of intermarriage. It was only allowed on the pre-condition that the schismatic partner converted to *Edinoverie* prior to the ceremony. Priests who failed to perform the conversion, or check whether one had already been performed, faced stiff penalties. One priest in the Don diocese was suspended in 1862 for the mere suspicion that this had occurred, despite two decades of nearly faultless service and the ardent protests of his parishioners.¹⁴⁷ When the Edict of Toleration in 1905 gave the Old Believers almost the same rights as other Christian confessions, a group of missionaries in Samara wondered whether this meant the Old Believers could remain in the schism when they married *edinovertsy*. One of them argued that to allow this ‘gives a new reason to the Old Believers to make strong accusations against the Orthodox Church for violating the teachings of the faith and repels them [still] further from the Church, which of course is not in the interests of the mission.’¹⁴⁸ The Church could accept interaction between Old Belief and *Edinoverie* but only on its own terms and in scenarios that could be closely controlled. Only then could *Edinoverie* bear fruit and not slide back towards the schism.

For the Church, the ambiguity of proximity to the schism lay in *Edinoverie*’s liminal status. *Edinoverie* was supposed to be the bridge from the schism into Orthodoxy and thus had to have some presence among the Old Believers. As one priest put it, ‘it is necessary to establish affairs so that the schismatics see clear evidence of God’s grace dwelling in the Church in the lives of the *edinovertsy* [...] every *edinoverets* in his own way must be

¹⁴⁵ N. Prialukhin, “Ust’tsilemskii edinovercheskii prikhod. (Istoriia postroeniia tserkvi i obrazovaniia prikhoda),” *Arkhangel’skie eparkhial’nie vedomosti* no. 17, (1910): 592.

¹⁴⁶ Vitebskii, *Raskol’ v ural’skom voiske*, 189–191.

¹⁴⁷ Lysogorskii, *Edinoverie Na Donu*, 634.

¹⁴⁸ RGIA, f. 796, op. 190, VI otd., 3 st., d.20, ll. 4-5.

a missionary, a propagator of light among the dark schismatics of the local region.¹⁴⁹ At the same time, the Church was well aware that the conversions were often insecure and that apostasy was a very real risk if the *edinovertsy* went unsupervised. Ambiguity was formed by the metaphor of ‘infection’ that predominated Church discourse.¹⁵⁰ Sheer physical proximity to Old Believers meant that the *edinovertsy* were at risk. The same rhetoric also justified keeping the *edinovertsy* in their confessional quarantine zone. Bringing them more fully into the Orthodox confession risked the further spread of schismatic infection. Thus, the need to utilise the *edinovertsy* as missionaries justified the caution of the Platonic rules and the suspicion of hierarchs to *Edinoverie*. But that same distrust meant exacerbating the feeling of religious difference and possibly pushing the *edinovertsy* back towards the schism. The logic of infection and quarantine thus contained a deep contradiction.

While close living conditions and certain institutional contexts might create a breeding ground for at least some mutual understanding, there was no undoing the damage caused by conversion. *Edinoverie* parish formation left a jagged wound between communities that seldom healed. The problem was that usually part of the Old Believer community did not convert. In the best case scenario, the new *edinovertsy* would found their own churches either by building them or making use of the house of their leader until the new parish had accumulated enough funds to make construction possible. Such occurred when Ksenofont Kriuchkov converted. The tiny new parish (it had only seventeen members) used Kriuchkov’s house as a church with the permission of the bishop of Penza.¹⁵¹

In other cases, however, the formation of a *Edinoverie* parish involved the seizure of Old Believer places of worship and liturgical equipment. The church in the Iaroslavl’ town of Romano-Borisoglebsk was formed by seizing a priestly chapel and then transferring the icons from a priestless prayerhouse in a triumphant display on 23 September 1854.¹⁵² Pavel Smirnov noted that his conversion first to the Belaia Krinitza hierarchy and then to *Edinoverie* (he was originally a *spasovets*) caused consternation. Although the priestless chapel was contained within his home, the Old Believer community had dedicated funds

¹⁴⁹ Nikol’skii, *Shestidesiatletie 1843-1903*, 49.

¹⁵⁰ For the examination of such rhetoric, see D. Beer, “The Medicalization of Religious Deviance in the Russian Orthodox Church (1880-1905),” *Kritika* 5 no. 3 (2004), 451-482.

¹⁵¹ Nevestin, “Raskol’ v sele Poime,” 389.

¹⁵² A. Mizgrov, *Spaso-arkhangel’skaia edinovercheskaia tserkov’ v g. Romano-Borisoglebske*. (Iaroslavl’, 1883), 2–3.

for its beautification and for its liturgical equipment.¹⁵³ When the Troitskaia church in Moscow was sequestered in 1854, the *edinovertsy* got their hands on more than 1,500 icons.¹⁵⁴ Conversion to *Edinoverie* could also shatter families. T. I. Kasilov noted how his mother entreated and his wife wept when he joined *Edinoverie*.¹⁵⁵ One husband in Tomsk was promptly arrested when he ‘declared the intention to murder his wife and newly born little girl because the former had agreed to baptise the girl in the *Edinoverie* church.’¹⁵⁶ This kind of family strife could be deadly to the cause of *Edinoverie*, as Timofei Verkhovskii observed in Chernigov: ‘the fact is that the people accepting *Edinoverie* are not whole families. They are part of families with close relatives who remain in the schism and therefore can easily be drawn to their former form of thought, if not by conviction, then to settle the disorder and strife in the family caused by this [the conversion to *Edinoverie*].’¹⁵⁷

The seizure of part of the Preobrazhenskoe cemetery in order to turn into the Nikol’skii *Edinoverie* monastery caused decades of bad blood. Their shared cemetery was a particular bone of contention. In 1879, the Old Believer undertakers refused some *edinovertsy* permission to bury the body of one Natal’ia Nikolaeva whose grieving friends were told that ‘they would not bury any more *edinovertsy* in their cemetery.’¹⁵⁸ Pavel Prusskii had to summon the police to get the *bespopovtsy* to comply. Nor did the indignities the Old Believers had to endure ever seem to end. On 18 April 1913, two *Edinoverie* novices broke into the cemetery whilst drunk: when the Old Believer undertakers confronted them, one drew a revolver and screamed, ‘I will shoot you all!’ after which ‘he advanced on the undertakers, swearing in deplorable language.’¹⁵⁹

Unsurprisingly therefore, the new *edinovertsy* could find themselves subject to persecution and disturbances. In Irkutsk they were subject to constant insults and economic pressure from the more prosperous Old Believers.¹⁶⁰ The priest of the church in the midst of the Moscow priestless cemetery complained that the schismatics left their

¹⁵³ Smirnov, *Zapiski sel'skogo sviashchennika*, 27.

¹⁵⁴ TsIAM, f. 1181, op. 1, d. 2, l. 127.

¹⁵⁵ T. I. Kasilov, ‘Ispoved byvshogo edinovertsa,’ *Tserkov'*, no. 30 (1908): 1036.

¹⁵⁶ Belikov, *Tomskii raskol'*, 201.

¹⁵⁷ Verkhovskii, *Starodub'e*, ch. III, 92.

¹⁵⁸ The Uspenskaia church was located above the gate to the Preobrazhenskoe cemetery: the complaint was that the Old Believers were leaving their horses in the gateway, beneath the altar. TsIAM, f. 1181, op. 1, d. 66, l. 1.

¹⁵⁹ TsIAM, f. 203, op. 360 (1879), d. 4, l. 2.

¹⁶⁰ M. S., *Istoricheskii ocherk*, 135.

horses near the altar of the Uspenskaia church at the time of the liturgy.¹⁶¹ The Old Believers, for their part, lost the treasured chapels that they and their ancestors had spent years and hundreds, if not thousands, of roubles building and beautifying. Deprived of their chapels and prayer houses, their religious life undoubtedly suffered. Of course, that was the point. *Edinoverie* would not only divest the Old Believers of numerical strength but also of the buildings and accoutrements necessary to worship, pressuring them to convert.

The ideologists of Old Belief wanted a firm line between heresy and their own brand of Orthodox Christianity. The Church and state helped in this matter. The seizure of property and the martyrdom of Old Believer leaders was the best possible way of ensuring the Old Believers looked on *Edinoverie* with distrust at best, outright hatred at worst. Coercion therefore turned the confessional borderline created by the Old Believer polemics into a reality. This begs the question: how could *Edinoverie* function as a missionary bridge when Old Believers had no love for either *Edinoverie* or the *edinovertsy*? The polemical literature itself dismissed *Edinoverie* because it relied on coercion and thereby violated Christian conscience and love. The transformation of *Edinoverie* into a tool of confessionalisation undoubtedly damaged Old Belief but it also meant that the reputation of *Edinoverie* among the Old Believers was permanently soiled. If the state ever abandoned persecution, then *Edinoverie* would undoubtedly struggle in its missionary endeavours.

What did this mean for the religious identities of the *edinovertsy*? The polemics made it clear that, in the eyes of the schismatics, the converts were no longer Old Believers. They might use the old rituals but they had become heretics the moment they joined the Nikonian Church: ‘there is no doubt that the *edinovertsy* will on death be in the same prison of hell with Judas the traitor, with the Yids, the crucifiers of Christ, and with Arius and other anathematized heretics.’¹⁶² Whilst *Edinoverie*’s position in relation to Orthodoxy was difficult to define for church writers, the Old Believers had no such problems when it came to placing *Edinoverie*’s adherents beyond the pale of Old Belief. Equally, the *edinovertsy*, as the inheritors of seized property, would have to face consistent aggression from their former communities. However, it is difficult to say what impact this would have on their identities. As was noted earlier, it is undoubted that a

¹⁶¹ TsIAM, f. 1181, op. 1, d. 2, l. 9.

¹⁶² Pichugin, *O edinoverii*, 30. Pichugin was deploying the exact same words that had been used in the 1667 anathema against the Old Believers.

substantial proportion of *edinovertsy* maintained both their pre-conversion beliefs about the Orthodox Church and thus remained inclined to the schism, even if the attitude of the Old Believers towards them was far from positive. Coercion and legal obligation was insufficient to make them feel Orthodox.

Among those who had genuinely accepted *Edinoverie*, the upsurge in popularity for a change in the name of *Edinoverie* to Orthodox Old Belief (*pravoslavnoe staroobriadchestvo*) at the end of the nineteenth century may be the key to the identity question.¹⁶³ The name demonstrated that the *edinovertsy* had not abandoned their identity as Old Believers, as practitioners of the pre-Nikonian rites, but it also pointed out the theological transformation that had they had undergone in the process of conversion: they no longer believed the Church and its priesthood to be heretical or servants of the Anti-Christ. As embittered and angry with the Church as he was, Ioann Verkhovskii never forsook it precisely because of Russian Orthodoxy's undoubted canonicity. For other early twentieth century reformers, the name bore testimony that *Edinoverie* was the most authentic version of Old Belief, that which still maintained a connection with the ecumenical Orthodoxy. So perhaps *Edinoverie* represented to such *edinovertsy* not so much a conversion into the Orthodox Church but rather a movement to another Old Believer concord that manifested a theological conviction in the canonical legitimacy of the Orthodox Church: maybe it was not so different from converting between the priestly and priestless groups. This is a difficult claim to prove, however: this will be explored more thoroughly in chapter V.

Reasons for Conversion

The reasons cited by Old Believers to explain their conversion to Orthodoxy were immensely varied. Theological argumentation circling around the Christian requirement for clergy often predominated in both published and private material. Typical were the accounts of the Belaia Krinitsa hierarchs who joined the Church in 1865. They emphasised that both the Scriptures and the Church canons demanded priests who were

¹⁶³ The first time this term was used was in a petition to the Holy Synod from 28 August 1890. This petition was from Muscovite *edinovertsy* and set out a plan for bishops, the removal of the anathemas, and the reorganisation of *Edinoverie* education in Moscow. TsIAM, f. 1181, op. 1, d. 5, ll. 1-2.

indisputably part of the apostolic succession.¹⁶⁴ Pavel Prusskii's conversion narrative was little more than a long list of citations justifying the need for the priesthood.¹⁶⁵

This theological focus was to be expected. The published accounts were good propaganda for the Church and applications for conversion would necessarily want to emphasise that the petitioner had come to the 'correct' theological understanding of Orthodoxy and Old Belief. However, this does not mean that such proclamations were insincere. Priests were highly valued by Orthodox parishioners, even if they frequently had disputes with them.¹⁶⁶ They were the dispensers of sacraments, blessings and rituals that had real value in the lives of the Russian peasantry. To be without a priest was thus often traumatic for a community. The state knew this very well. Nicholas I had tried to pressure the *beglopovtsy* precisely by cutting off the supply of exiled priests from the Irgiz monasteries, firstly through legal prohibition and then the conversion of the entirety of Irgiz to *Edinoverie*. Church, state and schism recognised that *Edinoverie*'s chief value lay in the fact that it could proffer canonically legitimate clergy who would perform by the old rites.

This was not the only theological reason. Individuals might become disillusioned with various other strands of Old Believer teaching. The priestless convert Ksenofont Kriuchkov explained that Alexander II's ending of the Crimean war and liberation of the serfs 'were the acts of the eternal Lord God and not the acts of the Anti-Christ.'¹⁶⁷ Alexander's policies caused them to become disillusioned with one of the core elements of Old Believer theology: that the Anti-Christ reigned on earth and the Russian state was his servant.

Divisions within Old Believer communities might also play a part. The foundation of the Pokrovskaia parish in Warsaw diocese in 1843 emerged from divisions among the Old Believers. The first was that between the priestless, the majority in the region, and a much smaller group of *beglopovtsy* who suffered 'adversity and oppression' from the former, provoking them to seek the protection of the Church.¹⁶⁸ A second, this time within the priestless Old Believer sect, was a personal rivalry between Firz Radin and Lipat Nikitin,

¹⁶⁴ "Ob''iasnitel'nye zapiski, podannye mitropolitu Filaretu iskavshim prisoedineniia k pravoslavnoi tserkvi chlenami belokrinit'skoi ierarkii v 1865 g.," *Bratskoe slovo*, no. 13, 14 (1884): 165–76, 222–32.

¹⁶⁵ Pavel (Lednev), *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii Nikol'skogo edinovercheskogo monastyrja nastoiatelia arkhimandrita Pavla* (Moscow, 1897), vol. 2, 1–41.

¹⁶⁶ C. Chulos, "Myths of the Pious or Pagan Peasant," *Russian History* 22, no. 2 (1995): 211–213.

¹⁶⁷ "Beseda po rukopolozhenii v iereiia," *Penzenskie eparkhial'nye vedomosti*, no. 4 (1879): 4.

¹⁶⁸ Nikol'skii, *Shestidesiatletie 1843-1903*, 27.

a factory owner and vodka purveyor. When Nikitin refused to give Radin vodka on credit, the latter swore he would see Nikitin's property seized. To this end, he established a *Edinoverie* church on Nikitin's land.¹⁶⁹ Thus, *Edinoverie* furnished a means to escaping from the persecution of a numerically larger sect and as a weapon to right a perceived insult. The fact that Nikitin was clearly part of the economic elite of the village whilst Radin was not adds a further dimension: *Edinoverie* could offer poorer Old Believers a way to level the playing field. The Old Believer groups of Nizhnii Tagil began to fracture because of resentment directed at the power of the socio-economic elite of the religious community and the growing assertiveness of the priestless. In the face of 'the disorders that arose from individual persons and the strife of parties, together with the despotism of the elders, the community of *edinovertsy* saw in itself legitimate order and calm that was guaranteed by the sponsorship of laws and officialdom.'¹⁷⁰ Poim was also home to several disputes on singing and on the subject of iconographic depictions of God the Father that transcended the divisions between the various priestly and priestless concords. The strife heightened *Edinoverie*'s appeal as it came to be seen as somewhat more stable than the feuding groups of schismatics.¹⁷¹ The Church was also cognisant of the missionary potential of such splits. When a dispute arose on the Don in 1880 that divided the Old Believers into three competing parties, the bishop decided to invite Pavel Prusskii to take advantage of the situation.¹⁷²

R. H. Greene has noted that uncorrupted saintly bodies were a valuable propaganda tool against the schism and sectarians.¹⁷³ On occasion, such relics did provoke conversions to *Edinoverie* or confirmed a decision to do so. Stories about miracles attributed to the relics of one St. Mitrofan persuaded a number of *pomortsy* in Barnaul to convert in 1843.¹⁷⁴ The same occurred in Ural'sk in 1878 when a group of Old Believers went to Voronezh to see

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 5.

¹⁷⁰ Varushkin, "O edinoveriie" II, 182.

¹⁷¹ Nevestin, "Raskol' v sele Poime," 269–271. If the converts thought *Edinoverie* would bring them peace, they were mistaken. The Christological question continued to plague the converts long after they had joined, causing the emergence of rival parties at the end of the 1880s. See M. Remezov, "Voprosy, predlozhennye edinovertsami s. Poima sovetu Penzenskogo innokentievskogo missionerskogo bratstva," *Penzenskie eparkhial'nye vedomosti*, no. 5 (1888): 10; A. Orlov, "Po povodu nedoumeniiia Poimskikh edinoveritsev," *Penzenskie eparkhial'nye vedomosti*, no. 11 (1889): 7–15; A. Orlov, "Otvét Poimskim edinovertsam," *Penzenskie eparkhial'nye vedomosti*, no. 23 (1889): 8–23.

¹⁷² Lysogorskii, *Edinoverie na Donu*, 750–751.

¹⁷³ R. H. Greene, *Bodies Like Bright Stars: Saints and Relics in Orthodox Russia* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2010), 33–38.

¹⁷⁴ Belikov, *Tomskii raskol'*, 188–189.

some miracle working remains. Their visit led them to recognise ‘the validity of the relics in the Orthodox Church’ and thus convert.¹⁷⁵

Money could also play a role. Father A. Nikol’skii’s Warsaw parish was the closest one to the *fillipovtsy* groups in eastern Prussia. The government, no doubt seeing an opportunity to plant Russians in the vulnerable and ethnically diverse western borderland, offered considerable payments to any Old Believer who would return from Prussia and convert to *Edinoverie*: ‘unsurprisingly many of their conversions to the Church were far from sincere. It is by this that frequent cases of apostasy of those who joined from the schism are explained.’¹⁷⁶ However, this policy was exceptional.

Finally there was government coercion. As one petition to Alexander II stipulated, ‘as a consequence of different threats against us, we resolved to accept *Edinoverie*, not according to the conviction of our souls but only from fear.’¹⁷⁷ Some Old Believers might convert because it was the only way in which they could get their chapels reopened.¹⁷⁸ Others would do so because it was the only way to save themselves from exile and forced labour for tempting others into apostasy.¹⁷⁹ Many of the Old Believer merchant elites of Moscow converted when Nicholas I threatened to revoke their guild membership if they failed to do so: 539 joined just two days before the law went into force on 1 January 1855.¹⁸⁰ Old Believers who had joined Orthodoxy under pressure might see *Edinoverie* as one way to reclaim their former rituals. They of course were blocked or delayed by the fifth rule of Platon on almost all occasions. Whilst obtaining priests was undoubtedly a strong lure for Old Believers, it was made so because they were aware of the advantages to be accrued by having ‘legal’ priests who could officiate without constant interference from the state and the Church. Timofei Verkhovskii told Old Believers in Chernigov that acceptance of *Edinoverie* meant ‘no-one then will persecute and catch your priests because[...]they will be confirmed by the administration.’¹⁸¹ The marriages and baptisms that *Edinoverie* priests performed were legitimate in the eyes of the state, unlike the civil

¹⁷⁵ Vitebskii, *Raskol’ v Ural’skom voiske*, 190.

¹⁷⁶ This policy seems to date from the 1840s and continued to 1868 at least. Nikol’skii, *Shestidesiatletie 1843-1903*, 28–30.

¹⁷⁷ Belikov, *Tomskii raskol*, 131.

¹⁷⁸ In 1840, the Old Believers of Nizhnesaldinsk told the bishop of Ekaterinburg that “if their chapel was re-opened and the liturgy was performed in it by a *Edinoverie* priest, then they would go to it to pray to God together with the *edinovertsy*.” Varushkin, “O edinoverii,” I, (1867): 281.

¹⁷⁹ Belikov, *Tomskii raskol*, 203.

¹⁸⁰ A. S. Beliajeff, “The Rise of the Old Orthodox Merchants of Moscow 1771-1894” (Ph.D. dissertation, Syracuse University, 1975), 165.

¹⁸¹ Verkhovskii, *Starodub’e*, ch. 1, 53.

unions performed by schismatic ministers: so conversion offered legal advantages for spouses and their children.

In summation, there were certainly reasons why an Old Believer might convert to *Edinoverie* out of conviction. It did offer a solution to the enduring problem that Old Belief had confronted since the end of the seventeenth century: the extinction of the priesthood and the end of the apostolic succession. No doubt *Edinoverie* also looked stable compared to Old Belief, which was constantly in the process of fracturing into new concords.

However, Nicholas I had permanently changed *Edinoverie* when he integrated it firmly into his assault on Old Belief. Coercion not only made the movement much larger but it also resulted in the transformation of its character. A huge proportion of *Edinoverie*'s members were there because they had been forced into conversion. The 1898 Tomsk missionary congress estimated that no more than one fifth of the *Edinoverie* presence in that diocese were sincere members: that meant that roughly 20,000 *edinovertsy* were inclined towards the schism.¹⁸² Coercion created yet another contradiction for the Church to deal with. The influx of 'insincere' *edinovertsy* in the reign of Nicholas I and their embittered progeny justified the confessional quarantine of the rules of Platon, thus providing a block to their reform. However, once the system of coercion began to crumble in the later nineteenth century and then died almost completely after 1905, the Synod had to find a way to keep its new flock within the Church: to loose them would be a propaganda disaster. The only way forward was to make the *edinovertsy* feel more Orthodox, to embark on a process of confessional integration and try to eradicate the feelings of religious difference created by the 1800 settlement. Reform of *Edinoverie* was both necessary and dangerous. It was needed to keep the *edinovertsy* in the Church but it was threatening because it might expose the Orthodox to schismatic infection.

Conclusion

The shape of *Edinoverie* was formed by two confessional boundaries: one with the Orthodox Church and another with the Old Believers. It possessed commonalities with both groups. In the act of conversion, *edinovertsy* officially signed up to the theological position of Russian Orthodoxy but they maintained many of the same rituals as the Old Believers. However, the commonalities were not sufficient to bridge the divisions.

¹⁸² "Obzor deiatel'nosti," 6.

The rules of Platon and subsequent policies ensured that ritual difference was institutionalised. The *edinovertsy* possessed their own clergy, their own superintendents, their own forms of parish order, their own monasteries, their own typography and their own schools, all of which served to protect and maintain the old rites. All this utterly undermined Metropolitan Platon's second attached opinion that the *edinovertsy* should abandon their rituals. Indeed, any attempt by Orthodox clergymen to thrust the Nikonian liturgy on their parishes served to accentuate a feeling of resentment and religious difference. In the worst-case scenario, it could provoke apostasy. *Edinoverie* clergymen were also hostile to attempts to fulfil Platon's hope since this would diminish the size of their parishes and thereby deprive them of economic support. Therefore, the road that led to confessional assimilation was permanently closed. *Edinoverie* ritual was not going to die out. The path to integration formulated by Subbotin and Pavel also suffered. By the time it was established as Synodal policy in 1886, the *edinovertsy* had already had over eight decades of experience of being treated separately from their Orthodox co-religionists. That experience could not be eradicated, even if the entire Church had wholeheartedly embarked upon Subbotin's plan for confessional integration. There was also the problem that the Orthodox priesthood had no reason to back the abolition of Platon's fifth rule that prevented Orthodox transfer to *Edinoverie*. Such threatened their livelihoods. The failure of the Church to provide decent salaries for Orthodox and *Edinoverie* clerical groups damaged their ability to generate unity in faith on the ground.

The financial reliance on parishioners rendered the Orthodox clergy unreliable tools for confessionalisation. The same made the *Edinoverie* clergy unsuited for bringing their flocks closer to the Church. Attempting to infuse the *Edinoverie* liturgy with Orthodox rites could threaten both a priest's emoluments and his position. Election also made it possible, or even probable, that the *edinovertsy* would elect their former Old Believer ministers to priestly posts, which meant that the person most responsible for 'elucidating to the *edinovertsy* the truth of the Greco-Russian church and the falsity of the schism' might be completely uninterested in doing so.¹⁸³ And even if such priests were committed to some degree of confessional integration, the cultural difference and economic competition between themselves and the Orthodox clergy may have denied them useful allies in such a struggle.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 10.

Nor was it easy to overcome the differences between the *edinovertsy* and the Old Believers. Schismatic polemicists told their flocks that the *edinovertsy* were heretics and therefore should not be associated with it. This barrier was confirmed by the coercive policies of Nicholas I. The seizure of chapels, monasteries, books and liturgical equipment furnished the Old Believers with a ready-made reason to despise *Edinoverie*. This damaged the future of *Edinoverie*'s mission to the schism: it was simply not trusted. The statistical evidence speaks volumes. Even with 350,000 adherents by 1917, the movement had barely touched Old Belief, much less brought it back into union with the Church. Worse still, by turning *Edinoverie* into a tool for confessionalisation, Nicholas had made it dependent on coercion. The Moscow typography, a source of funding, books and equipment for parishes, needed prohibitions against Old Believer books to be financially viable. Continued persecution was required to keep those forced to convert in the fold and maintain growth. If religious toleration was extended or freedom of conscience introduced, the prospects of *Edinoverie* did not look good. Coercion also had a paradoxical effect on Church policy in relation to Old Belief. The surge of insincere converts warranted distrust to the *edinovertsy* but also provided the impetus for reform. This helps explain the slow and ambiguous pace of reform between 1864 and 1917. The hierarchs of the Church were never fully able to decide between quarantine and integration because both directions were justifiable. One was needed to prevent infection by 'insincere' converts. The other was necessary to keep *edinovertsy* in the flock and counter the accusations of schismatic propagandists.

Thus, the rules of Metropolitan Platon and the coercive confessionalisation of Nicholas I made unity in faith almost impossible to attain and at the same time damaged *Edinoverie*'s ability to attract schismatics. *Edinoverie* could neither make converts feel secure in their Orthodoxy nor could they offer much to the world from whence they had come. One Belaia Krinitza pamphlet put it clearly in 1900, 'the *edinovertsy* are neither New nor Old Believers but something in between: in short, they are neither fish nor foul, neither this nor that.'¹⁸⁴ It was down to the *edinovertsy* to find a third way where they could balance their past and their present, their Old Believer rituals and their Orthodox theology.

¹⁸⁴ Shalabanov, "Vzgliady staroobriadtsa," 395.

V: Provincial *Edinoverie* in Nizhnii Novgorod, 1870-1905

Introduction

In 1617, the twelve-year-old peasant Nikita Minin fled from his abusive stepmother, trudging north from the village of Vel'demanovo to the Zheltovodskii Makar'ev monastery on the banks of the Volga. The boy cannot possibly have imagined the changes that he would bring to his native Nizhnii Novgorod. He cannot have conceived that his actions as Nikon, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, would turn his home into a frontline in the struggle between the Orthodox Church and the Old Believers. He was not solely to blame. Avvakum Petrov and Ivan Neronov, both originally from Nizhnii Novgorod, became the first heresiarchs of Old Belief. The schism proliferated quickly in these lands. The organs of ecclesiastical and secular power in Nizhnii were weak, allowing the schismatics some respite from persecution. In 1719, it was estimated that there were as many as 283 Old Believers for every 1,000 residents in the region.¹

As Nikita meandered through the forests and clambered the hills for which the region was famous, he might have passed by the town of Bol'shoe Murashkino, perhaps even seeking food and shelter there in preparation for his march to the great river and its monastery. Over two centuries later, this community was part of the attempt to end the schism that Minin caused, becoming a central hub of *Edinoverie* in the region. It was not only one of the largest parishes in the region, with 1102 *edinovertsy* ascribed in 1904, but it was also one of the best organised in the Empire, possessing a lay brotherhood that facilitated the distribution of alms, the beautification of the church, and the provision of education.² The spirit of *Edinoverie* here was to prove very strong. The church in the neighbouring hamlet of Maloe Murashkino is one of the few *Edinoverie* temples that managed to maintain its services from its foundation in 1876 to the present day.³

Within this chapter, I will examine the particularities of *Edinoverie* in Nizhnii Novgorod in the last third of the nineteenth century. I turn back to the themes that preoccupied me in the previous chapter, looking at numbers, geographical distribution, administration and clerical careers but this time within the confines of a single province. The first aim is to provide an area-specific analysis to illustrate my earlier claims relating to the localised

¹ R. V. Kaurkin and O. A. Pavlova, *Edinoverie v Rossii: ot zarozhdeniia idei do nachala XX veka* (St. Petersburg, 2011), 74.

² N. I. Dranitsyn, *Adres-kalendar Nizhegorodskoi eparkhii na 1904 g.* (Nizhnii Novgorod, 1904), 308.

³ S. S. Mikhailov, "Iz istorii edinoveriia v Moskovskoi eparkhii v XIX stoletii," *Tserkovno-istoricheskii vestnik* 9 (2002): 83.

nature of *Edinoverie*: that it was a phenomenon defined not so much by the edicts of the central authorities or by the theologising of learned Petersburgers and Muscovites but rather by a panoply of contingent factors emerging from the human and physical geography of each individual province.

The second purpose is to expose the category of ‘conversion’ from Orthodoxy to *Edinoverie* to a greater degree of scrutiny. The very use of the word ‘conversion’ was problematic since it indicates a perception of confessional difference. How, as many asked, could one ‘convert’ to *Edinoverie* when it was officially considered part of Orthodoxy? The use of the term often suggested a certain degree of hostility or contempt for *Edinoverie* but it also reflected the realities of the rules of Platon that, by prohibiting an easy shift from one group to the other, confirmed the existence of a confessional dividing line. This brought into sharp relief the problem of ‘secret’ or ‘unregistered’ Old Believers, those who were noted as Orthodox in church metrical books but who considered themselves to be Old Believers. This was nothing less than a clash between two conceptions of religious identity, a bureaucratic one that defined Orthodoxy through record keeping and one that focussed on both internal belief and ritual behaviour as the determinant of religious belonging. As we saw in chapter III, the Synod and the Church hierarchy were cognisant of the conflict and had, in 1881 and 1886, begun to break down the strict borders between *Edinoverie* and Orthodoxy, thus shifting away from an administrative conception of religious identity. Therefore I also ask the question whether confessional integration had any impact in this particular province: did the idea of complete unity trickle down the Volga to Nizhnii Novgorod?

It would have been highly instructive to be able to analyse conversion from *Edinoverie* to Old Belief in similar terms but here the archival sources are almost silent. It would appear that investigations into apostasy from *Edinoverie* were very rarely conducted. Even in terms of pure numbers, there is almost no information. Unlike their Orthodox counterparts, *Edinoverie* superintendants did not contribute to annual reports on apostasy within their districts. Given that the consistory was most meticulous in obtaining details about conversion to the schism in Orthodox parishes, the absence of similar details for the *edinovertsy* is curious. Perhaps it suggests that the consistory feared that the number of conversions from *Edinoverie* would be so considerable that it would push their statistics up to unacceptable levels. Or perhaps the consistory and successive bishops simply did not care enough about *Edinoverie* flocks to bother obtaining numbers, considering it no loss when the quasi-schismatics returned from whence they came.

II

Nizhnii Novgorod

The city of Nizhnii Novgorod retains the ability to amaze with its distinctive topography. Divided by the river Oka, the historical Upper City on the eastern bank towers above the Lower City. At the very top of the cliff is the Kremlin, overlooking the confluence between the Oka and the Volga. The presence of these two important rivers and their tributaries made Nizhnii and its surrounding province an important centre of commerce, most vividly symbolised by its internationally famous annual trade fair.⁴ Therefore the province was predominated not by agriculture but by the production of an enormous cornucopia of goods. Only in the southeast did an agricultural economy prevail.⁵ Occupied by 1.5 million residents by the end of the nineteenth century, it was one of the most populous and prosperous regions of central Russia and it was to be propitious for *Edinoverie* as well.

Origins and Spread

Nizhnii Novgorod's dense forests offered both sustenance and secrecy to Old Believers fleeing the hardships of persecution in central Russia. Thus, the province 'was distinguished from other places by the prevalence of the Old Belief.'⁶ In the early nineteenth century, there were some 28 Old Believer sketes, most located in the northern Semenov district around the Kerzhenets river whilst the famous trading town of Gorodets served as a centre for the priestless Old Believers.⁷ As Catherine Evtuhov has noted, it was scarcely possible to find anyone crossing themselves with three fingers in affluent Bol'shoe Murashkino.⁸ The sheer prominence of Old Belief had made it a centre of innovation in terms of the Church mission. Bishop Pitirim (1719 to 1738) was one of the first churchmen to make use of the tactic of public disputations with the Old Believers and he organised a small missionary school in the region.⁹ By the time of the 1897

⁴ For the trade fair in the nineteenth century, see A. L. Fitzpatrick, *The Great Russian Fair: Nizhnii Novgorod, 1840-90* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990).

⁵ C. Evtuhov, *Portrait of a Russian Province. Economy, Society, and Civilization in Nineteenth-Century Nizhnii Novgorod* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011).

⁶ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁷ M. S., *Istoricheskii ocherk edinoveriia* (St Petersburg, 1867), 174–178.

⁸ Evtuhov, *Portrait of a Russian Province*, 55.

⁹ Kaurkin and Pavlova, *Edinoverie v Rossii*, 73.

census, the Old Believers officially numbered 88,637 people and were mostly concentrated in the northern Balakhnin and Semenov districts.¹⁰

Edinoverie began in 1797 when a group of a roughly 1,000 Old Believers applied to bishop Pavel (Ponomarev) to be granted priests by the Orthodox Church who would officiate with the old rites. In 1798, the new *edinovertsy* were given the Dukhovnaia church in the Kremlin, a building they were to keep until 1840 when its attachment to the governor's residence made it necessary to transfer to another temple inside the imposing fortress.¹¹ It was to take until 1816 before *Edinoverie* crept beyond the city itself with the establishment of a parish in Pavlovo, a substantial settlement about eighty kilometres to the southwest.

Just as with the rest of the Russian Empire, it was the accession of Nicholas I that really transformed the fate of *Edinoverie* in the region. In the twenty-four years between 1831 and 1855, the number of parishes rose from three to fourteen and two convents and a monastery were also converted from Old Believer sketes.¹² The creation of the Kerzhenskii monastery gathered a degree of fame from the novels of P. I. Mel'nikov who, as a Ministry of Internal Affairs bureaucrat, had played no small role in its conversion. He and bishop Iakov (Vecherkov) forged *Edinoverie* in the region.

From this point onwards, *Edinoverie* continued to expand at a fairly consistent pace, with the number of parishes reaching 23 by 1904.¹³ Somewhat surprisingly, the twilight years of the old regime were a period of considerable growth. The number of parishes rose to 35 by 1917, meaning a church was founded almost once a year on average. This statistic tells us that the 1905 Edict of Religious Toleration did not necessarily have a negative impact on *Edinoverie* everywhere and indeed it was even able to prosper in the conditions created by the law.

In terms of people, the *edinovertsy* numbered roughly 14,000 by the beginning of the twentieth century: it was the largest concentration in European Russia. Of the 23 parishes extant by that date, 5 had over 1,000 *edinovertsy* whilst only the Spaso-Preobrazhenskaia church had less than one hundred parishioners, a matter that can be explained by its special status as a cemetery church. Most of the other parishes averaged between 400 and

¹⁰ Of course, the actual number was probably far higher. N. A. Troinitskii, ed., *Pervaia vseobshchaia perepis' Rossiiskoi imperii 1897*, vol. XXV, Tetrad II (St. Petersburg, 1904), 64.

¹¹ M. S. Bugrova, "Iz istorii Nizhegorodskogo edinoveriia," *Nizhegorodskaia starina* no. 17 (2008): 24.

¹² Kaurkin and Pavlova, *Edinoverie v Rossii*, 106–107.

¹³ Dranitsyn, *Adres-kalendar*, 306–308.

800 members at any given point in the last decades of the century. Just as with other *Edinoverie* parishes throughout the Empire, the peasantry and petty townspeople constituted the majority of the parishioners with a sprinkling of merchants on top. Only the Simeonovskaia church in the city of Nizhnii itself proved exceptional since the majority of its flock was comprised of households from the merchant estate.¹⁴

Therefore *Edinoverie* had spread to most parts of the province and had established a presence in many of the main urban centres by 1904. Nizhnii Novgorod itself had two churches whilst Gorodets, Murashkino and Pavlovo possessed one church each: two or three close parishes in the surrounding countryside also served them. Nearly all of the churches were located in the central districts of the province along the banks of the Oka and Volga. The four southernmost districts (Ardatov, Arzamas, Lukoianov and Serach) had only two parishes between them and neither was particularly large. The northern district of Semenov was, in contrast, particularly well served since three parishes and all three monastic institutions were located within its boundaries. The picture of *Edinoverie* in this province shows a concentration in the centre and northern parts, following the major river-based trade routes and pre-existing patterns of Old Believer habitation. The south, however, was almost entirely devoid of *Edinoverie*, perhaps because its predominantly agricultural economy lacked a sufficiently large or rich merchant presence to lead in the foundation of parishes.

Whilst the *edinovertsy* constituted only a tiny proportion (roughly 0.97%) of the total number of Orthodox faithful in the region, their presence in certain regions and urban centres was far more pronounced, although probably never a clear majority.¹⁵ The parish of the Vladimirskaia church in Akhpaevka had 1,404 parishioners in 1904 whilst the town's population in 1897 was 1,640. Even though a sizeable proportion of these parishioners were scattered in five settlements, most had their residence close to the parish church.¹⁶ The *edinovertsy* in Bol'shoe and Maloe Murashkino similarly would have constituted a sizeable minority. Together they numbered 1,638 out of total combined population of 5,868.¹⁷ Even where the *edinovertsy* were an absolute minority, they were

¹⁴ TsANO, f. 570, op. 559 (1875), d. 78, l. 5ob.

¹⁵ The total Orthodox and *Edinoverie* population was 1,449,382 according to the 1897 census. Troinitskii, *Pervaia Vseobshchaia Perepis'*, XXV, tetrad II:64.

¹⁶ Ibid., vol. XXV, tetrad I: 46–47; Dranitsyn, *Adres-kalendar*, 307. It should be noted that the Akhpaevka parish was the second largest in the diocese, surpassed only by that of the town of Somovka.

¹⁷ Troinitskii, *Pervaia vseobshchaia perepis'* XXV, tetrad I:60–61, 66–67; Dranitsyn, *Adres-kalendar*, 308.

still proportionally more considerable than the diocese-wide percentage would lead us to believe. For instance, 345 *edinovertsy* lived in Vorsma in 1886, making them 7% of its 1897 population.¹⁸ Therefore, the impact of *Edinoverie* was far greater in certain parts of the diocese than others and their influence on local religious life was thus correspondingly greater in individual towns and villages than their small numbers suggest.

However, the peculiar way in which *Edinoverie* parishes were formed often limited the extent to which the parishioners were concentrated in any one given locality. Small numbers of converts who were unable to support churches of their own joined those places of worship that were closest to them. This could result in drastically small numbers of *edinovertsy* being scattered among various settlements. The parish of Pashutino demonstrates this clearly. Only 120 of its 307 parishioners were located in the same village as the parish church whilst the rest were spread over a distance of between 2 and 18 versts, including a single family of four in the hamlet of Bulgakov.¹⁹ Such a situation would inevitably have impinged on the ability of the parishioners to take regular communion and also on the supervisory capacities of the clergy and the consistory.

Finally, we should consider the relations of the *edinovertsy* to the Orthodox. As we shall see later, this is no easy task. Individual priests sometimes arrived at diametrically opposite conclusions about the relation of the *edinovertsy* to the Orthodox based on how positively they viewed them. However, we do find instances of co-operation. In the parish of Somovki ‘both the *edinovertsy* and those belonging to parish church of Fokin participated in the building of the church of Somovki and all the peasants of this village continue to participate in its support; the church they consider to be all of theirs.’²⁰ In Uzhovo, the *Edinoverie* priest officiated in the Orthodox church when there was a need and the *edinovertsy* had turned to the Orthodox cleric when there was no *Edinoverie* one present.²¹

Administration

The Synodal period of the Russian Orthodox Church has long been noted for the tendency to frequently rotate bishops between sees, resulting in high rates of turn over.

¹⁸ TsANO, f. 570, op. 559 (1886), d. 113, l. 11ob; Troinitskii, *Pervaia Vseobshchaia Perepis'*, 1901, XXV, tetrad I:54–55. The total number of parishioners for the Vorsma church was 938.

¹⁹ Ibid., l. 19ob.

²⁰ TsANO, f. 570, op. 559 (1891), d. 91, l. 6.

²¹ Ibid., op. 559 (1891), d. 25, l. 46.

Nizhnii Novgorod was no exception to this rule. Between 1869 and 1910, there were eight prelates, of whom only three led the diocese for more than five years.²² Among them were some fairly distinguished individuals. Ioannikii (Rudinev) went on to be the Metropolitan of Moscow, Modest (Strel'bitskii) was a noted church historian and Vladimir (Petrov) had been a successful missionary among the polytheist peoples of the Altai region. However, none of them had any experience or interest in missionary work among the Old Believers and consequently their attitude towards *Edinoverie*, as far as it can be ascertained, was one of indifference. Their reports to the Synod on *Edinoverie* matters were ad verbatim copies of the judgements produced by the consistory. The one exception was Nazarii (Kirillov). He personally blessed a new altar in the Spaso-Preobrazhenskaia church in Nizhnii Novgorod, commissioned a report on the status of *Edinoverie* in the diocese in 1904 and took on an active role in the debates surrounding *Edinoverie* between 1905 and 1912, emerging as one of the most vociferous opponents of Simeon Shleev.²³ As such, prior to 1901 the consistory exercised almost a free hand in *Edinoverie* affairs.

Responsible to the consistory were two *Edinoverie* superintendents, the first in Pavlovo and the second in the cemetery church in Nizhnii. The former supervised the churches in the western Gorbatov and Ardatov districts whilst all the others fell under the control of the latter. Such an unequal division of labour left the superintendent in Nizhnii Novgorod with a flock of over 10,000 individuals spread far to the north, south and east, a fact which would suggest that his supervision can never had been particularly strict if only for logistical reasons.²⁴

Priests

Due to the presence of a great deal of archival material on the *Edinoverie* priests of Nizhnii Novgorod, I am able to present a fairly coherent picture of their education. Here I present a sample of 43 ordained clergy (priests and deacons) from the period between 1870 and 1905. Thanks to the work of Kaurkin and Pavlova, it is also possible to make some contrasts with the period prior to 1870 to see if changes occurred.

²² The three were Makarii (Mirolubov) (1879-1885), Vladimir (Nikol'skii) (1892-1900) and Nazarii (Kirillov) (1901-1910).

²³ For the report, see TsANO f. 570, op. 559 (1904), d. 16. For Nazarii's foray into the anathema debate, see Nazarii, "K voprosu o kiatvakh Antiokhiiskogo patriarkha Makarii i sobora 1656 g. na znamenuiushchikhsia dvuperstno," *Missionerskoe obozrenie* no. 1, 2 (1910): 33-42, 222-233.

²⁴ The Pavlovo superintendent estimated the total number of parishioners in his care at 3,630 in 1904. See TsANO f. 570, op. 559 (1904), d. 16, l. 8.

The educational level of the clergy provides us with an important, although by no means infallible, indicator for considering the level of integration of the clergy with ecclesiastical culture and institutions. Of the 43 priests considered, 11, or 26%, wielded only home schooling whilst 10 had seminary education and 17 had attended lower level church schools. This is a surprisingly high rate for such a late period when the rate of parish formation had declined. Over half of the churches had existed for at least four decades by 1904 which means these home schooled priests were not heading recently converted parishes. It is a fact not explained away by a lower level of education among the deacons: in fact, all of them had received instruction in church institutions. This means that the figure of home schooled rises to 32% if we focus on the higher-ranking clergymen. Although our information for the period from 1840 to 1870 is not conclusive, it would appear that only two *Edinoverie* priests had not been to a church school at this point. Finally, if we take the numbers for 1904 alone (i.e. remove from the sample those priests who had died or been moved elsewhere by 1904, leaving us with 31 individuals), then we find that the percentage of priests with only informal instruction rises to 42%. This figure becomes all the more staggering if we look at the educational levels of the Orthodox clergy in the same year. Only 4 of approximately 936 priests lacked any formal schooling whilst the vast majority had attended church institutions.²⁵ Thus, the *Edinoverie* clergy possessed far lower levels of formal education than their Orthodox counterparts, a fact which no doubt contributed to the gap already created by different forms of liturgical life and competition for parishioners in areas where those officially denoted as Orthodox preferred the old rituals.

It is therefore apparent that the number of converts elected to the priesthood by their parishioners increased during the latter half of the nineteenth century even though fewer churches were under construction in this period. In other words, the *Edinoverie* parishes of Nizhnii Novgorod were not only being staffed more and more by *edinovertsy* as time went on but also the clerical positions were increasingly being filled by converts as opposed to the children of *Edinoverie* priests. Since home education may also imply peasant origins, the ranks of the *Edinoverie* clergy in the province were perhaps growing more plebeian in character prior to 1905. It might also be surmised that the cultural gap between the Orthodox and the *Edinoverie* clergy was becoming more expansive. However, we should not necessarily presume that convert status and lowly origin

²⁵ 56 had attended the lower church schools, 830 the seminary and 18 one of the ecclesiastical academies. 15 had been to a secular school or university and we have no information regarding 13 priests. I have compiled these figures from the list provided in Dranitsyn, *Adres-Kalendar*, 149–305.

hampered interaction with church institutions. Ioann Shleev, the father of the famous Simeon, is a case in point. Even before he came to Nizhnii Novgorod in 1887, Father Ioann had had startling success in his home diocese of Simbirsk, having been praised by the Synod and his bishop in 1882 for his missionary efforts. Once in Nizhnii, he continued to rise and be rewarded by successive prelates. His career was capped in 1904 when he became the superintendent for the Pavlovo district.²⁶ Neither Ioann's peasant roots nor his experience as a former Old Belief minister disqualified him from having a career blessed with accomplishments.

We should keep in mind that whilst such home education was no doubt of a different character to that proffered by the Church, it was not necessarily inadequate. Old Believers put a great deal of store in literacy and they often were well versed in the Scripture, patristic texts and other theological literature. Notably, however, a report on the character of one priest 'from the schismatics' did mention that 'he constantly reads books, journals and scholarly theological essays relating to this matter [i.e. the performance of the liturgy]', which suggests that an Old Belief education may not have prepared all convert priests for their new duties.²⁷

This leads us to wonder about the performance of the *Edinoverie* clergy. The clerical reports for our sample group reveal that the superintendents and the consistory had no problems with these priests. Their behaviour was either rated 'good' or 'very good' as was their literacy and knowledge of singing. None of them had any fines placed against them, meaning that the consistory found that the clergy were matching whatever standards they were imposing. More qualitative evidence comes from the detailed 1904 reports rendered by the two *Edinoverie* superintendents at the request of bishop Nazarii. Vladimir Serebrovskii reported that the clergy in his district all behaved soberly. Whilst one deacon was noted for drinking at home, he always cleaned up for church services. Thus, 'the majority of parishioners relate to these pastors with confidence, turning to them for explanation of their doubts and for advice in their domestic affairs.'²⁸ Shleev stated that his priests always performed the old style services 'lovingly' and were active not only in their leadership of worship but also through 'extra-liturgical lectures in the homes of parishioners and in the teaching of children in the church parish schools.'²⁹ The general picture is of a rather well-behaved group of church servitors, an impression

²⁶ TsANO, f. 570, op. 559 (1904), d. 124, l. 2ob.

²⁷ Ibid., d. 16, l. 3ob.

²⁸ TsANO, f. 570, op. 559 (1904), d. 16, l. 3ob.

²⁹ Ibid., l. 7ob.

backed by the absence of complaints from either the diocesan administration or the parishioners in the archives of the consistory. This is in marked contrast to the situation in Tobol'sk, where Suslova notes that 16 of 80 clerical servitors received poor reviews from their superintendents.³⁰

Finally, the point of origin of the *Edinoverie* clergy is also worth examining. Virtually the entire sample is made up of natives of Nizhnii Novgorod, the exceptions being Shleev, K. N. Belnov (from Riazan) and K. V. Levikov (Kostroma). Therefore the clergy helped to reinforce the local character of *Edinoverie* since most of their familial connections, friendship groups and career paths were firmly framed by the institutions of the diocese. This would have furnished them with an intimate knowledge of their locality and strong links with their colleagues. Such can be demonstrated by number of clerical positions held by the same kinship groups. The Listov, Vedenetskii, Ternovskii, Petrukhin and Vinogradov families all had at least two members holding an ordained rank between 1870 and 1905.

Schools and the Pokrovskoe Brotherhood

Church parish schools were certainly on the increase in *Edinoverie* communities. By 1904, the parishes of Isady, Akhapaeva, Somovka, Bol'shoe Murashkino, Pavlovo, Medvedovo and Pashutino possessed such educational establishments. For the most part, they had been founded between 1884 and 1900 and taught no more than 40 children each.

The one exception to this was the Bol'shoe Murashkino school that was built in 1869. Founded by Ivan Shestov, a Moscow merchant born in Murashkino, the institution was meant to function on the same basis as that under the Troitskaia church in Moscow, proffering free education to boys and girls and teaching not just the children of the *edinovertsy* but also those of the Orthodox and Old Believers.³¹ However, bishop Ioannikii (Rudinev) required that it exclude Orthodox children in 1874, thus turning the issue of education into a site for confessional confrontation. I will return to this particular problem in the next section. For the moment, I will confine myself to some comments to what kind of education was on offer for the students of this school.

The curriculum was quite basic, confining itself to teaching reading, writing and arithmetic as well as the most fundamental prayers of the Orthodox Church. There were

³⁰ L. N. Suslova, "Edinoverie v Tobol'skoi gubernii vo vtoroi polovine XIX - nachale XX v.," *Problemy istorii Rossii*, no. 7 (2008): 228–229.

³¹ TsANO, f. 570, op. 559 (1870), d. 15, l. 3.

three courses, each supposed to last a year, and they were all taught by the *Edinoverie* priest, his deacon and a teacher paid for by Shestov. It was estimated in 1886 that between 400 and 500 pupils had graduated from at least one of the courses.³² The Old Believers always formed a tiny minority of the pupils and indeed by 1890 they seemed to have stopped attending entirely.

The distinctly *Edinoverie* character of the school came into play in terms of the texts used for teaching. These included a reprint of a psalter from the time of Patriarch Iosif and an old-style alphabet book originally from 1647. In other words, the materials focussed almost exclusively on Old Church Slavonic.³³ The teaching methodology employed was a frequent source of tension: numerous reports from both Orthodox and *Edinoverie* priests complained that the method of rote learning was inadequate since the children forgot what they had learned and did not understand its meaning. However, attempts to impose newer methods upset both Shestov and the parents. When Father Lavra Evergestov, a young Orthodox overseer, suggested phonetic teaching of the alphabet and religious lectures to those who had not yet learned to read or write, it resulted in Shestov writing to Ioannikii to ask for Evergestov's removal as the parents were 'extremely dissatisfied' with such changes: 'the time still has not yet come [for] the new means of teaching children in our school.'³⁴ The petition resulted in Evergestov's replacement.

Why the parishioners were so fiercely protective of the old method is suggested in a later letter from Shestov to bishop Modest: 'in our fatherland in the olden days, children were taught literacy by the Holy Scriptures and a necessary group of holy writings and, after [basic] literacy was achieved, with the Hours, Psalter and books of a predominately liturgical and religious [character]: this is precisely how reading is taught in our school.'³⁵ The same missive marshals arguments in favour of the teaching of Old Church Slavonic, including some printed in the diocesan newspaper. Thus the attachment to the old method was closely linked both to tradition and the requirement of both the *edinovertsy* and the Old Believers that literacy be mostly in the older liturgical language rather than modern Russian. Practical arguments (the desire for only education that would assist children in their parents' work) may have also played a role. A report from 1874 stressed that the

³² Ibid., l. 121-121ob.

³³ Ibid., l. 5ob. The senior class also read some of the works of Metropolitan Filaret (Drozdov) and several books printed by the Synodal typography so some modern Russian was evidently taught. The New Testaments they used were apparently both in modern Russian and Old Church Slavonic.

³⁴ Ibid., l. 53ob.

³⁵ Ibid., l. 107.

parents refused their children to be taught anything that they did not consider ‘correct, useful and salvational.’³⁶

Not surprisingly given this insistence on the old methods, reports on the quality of the school are peppered with criticisms about the inefficiency of the teaching. In 1887, the *Edinoverie* superintendent complained that only some of the students knew the basic prayers and even they could not explain them. All of them were entirely ignorant of the Scriptures: ‘no-one from among the students was able to independently relate a single event either from the Old or New Testament – this means that biblical history is completely unknown.’³⁷ Whilst they could read Old Church Slavonic, the children could ‘scarcely grasp a word’ of modern Russian. Numeracy was not much better since the young *edinovertsy* were taught only to write the numbers and little else.³⁸

Admittedly, this was not all down to the pedagogical method. An Orthodox priest reviewing the school noted that pupils could enter into a course at any given point in the year, which meant the teacher was unable to speak to the class collectively but had to spend his time monitoring individual lessons for each child.³⁹ The priest was also busy with Bol’shoe Murashkino’s burgeoning congregation and could not devote great amounts of time to education.⁴⁰ Therefore even those relatively sympathetic to the school and its founder noted that the level of schooling acquired there was scarcely comparable to that which might be attained in similar institutions. One clergyman was particularly damning, stating that ‘such a school brings very little advantage to popular education. There are repeated instances when the parents of the children who study at the school move them to the Orthodox school.’⁴¹ However, as much as the school was subject to scathing critique from both Orthodox and *Edinoverie* priests, it is worth noting that this was the only educational institution in Bol’shoe Murashkino before 1886 when an Orthodox parish school was founded. Certainly Orthodox parishioners thought the literacy and numeracy skills attained were satisfactory⁴² and Shestov claimed that a great many of its pupils had gone on to find work as secretaries.⁴³

³⁶ Ibid., l. 19ob.

³⁷ Ibid., l. 131.

³⁸ Ibid., l. 48.

³⁹ Ibid., l. 120ob-121.

⁴⁰ Ibid., l. 130ob.

⁴¹ Ibid., l. 131ob.

⁴² Ibid., l. 98ob.

⁴³ Ibid., l. 107.

Whatever its contribution to the cultural level of Bol'shoe Murashkino, the school does help to demonstrate how the attachment to certain forms of ritual and liturgical life pervaded even the formal education of the *edinovertsy*. Here was an institution where love of the old texts and the old liturgical language could be inculcated, thus ensuring that the key markers of *Edinoverie* identity were preserved for another generation. It is no small wonder therefore that Shestov and the parents were so defensive of its curricula when Orthodox priests came knocking at the behest of the consistory. Despite their original commitment to teach Orthodox students, the organisers of the school had no desire to see their system for preserving the old liturgical ways tampered with.

Intimately connected with the school was the Pokrovskaia Brotherhood, a *Edinoverie* religious fraternity based in Bol'shoe Murashkino that was dedicated to maintaining an almshouse, the school and the local church.⁴⁴ This brotherhood was the first *Edinoverie* one in the Russian Empire (it was founded in 1874) and was not to be joined by another example until Simeon Shleev established one for the *edinovertsy* of St. Petersburg in 1908. The fraternity in Bol'shoe Murashkino was limited to entirely local concerns and thus did not spread its aegis any further than Maloe Murashkino, another parish very close by. Shestov, its leading light, provided it with most of its finance, donating three stone shops in Moscow that brought an annual income of 500 roubles.⁴⁵ Membership with a vote in its assembly was given to all (Orthodox, Old Believer or *edinoverets*) on the donation of three roubles. However, any Old Believer who did join might find the Brotherhood's commitment to missionary activities less than congenial.⁴⁶

Regrettably we have virtually no record of how the Brotherhood performed its tasks and what relationship it had with either local Orthodox or Old Believer communities. The only reports I have found in the archives are petitions from the Brotherhood's council that try to persuade the bishops to allow Orthodox children back into the school. Nonetheless, its very existence, combined with the school and the almshouse existing in Bol'shoe Murashkino, points to an organisational level in this parish that was essentially unsurpassed anywhere outside Moscow and St. Petersburg. Perhaps it was this that enabled the local *edinovertsy* to organise their petition to the Synod in 1877 and several others over the following decades. The fact that the issue of allowing Orthodox children to attend *edinovertsy* schools was a fundamental point in the first petition would suggest

⁴⁴ The school was in fact originally held in one of the rooms of the almshouse and did not attain its own building until 1886. See *ibid.*, I. 104.

⁴⁵ Kaurkin and Pavlova, *Edinoverie v Rossii* 172.

⁴⁶ For a transcription of all 32 regulations, see *ibid.*, 171–176.

that Shestov and the Pokrovskaia Brotherhood played a considerable role in organising this effort.⁴⁷ The indefatigable zeal of Shestov also points how important wealthy merchants were to *Edinoverie*, not just for their capital but also for their personalities and connections. Transplanting an idea he had derived from his work in Moscow into his home town, Shestov established a series of institutions that shaped the lives of local *edinovertsy*, perhaps helping them to become more aware of themselves as a community of believers, linked through education, common striving for church beautification, and the relief of poverty.

Ascription, Confession and Conscience

Ascription

In the Russian Empire, religion functioned as a method for managing population groups to ensure the stability of the polity. It was in this sense that it was a confessional state. The ascription of religious identity served a bureaucratic function. Alongside the category of social estate (*soslovie*), it was the main way in which the state assigned people to groups with accordant privileges, limitations, and responsibilities. Movement between religious groups was therefore a matter of state concern, especially if it was a movement away from Orthodoxy, the official faith. It is for this reason that apostasy constituted a criminal offence until 1905. This is the context in which we should understand the government's almost implacable opposition to freedom of conscience. Investing the sovereign individual with the right to choose their faith both challenged the authority of the state to control religious ascription and rendered the confessional system of governance unworkable. Religious identity and conversion were therefore politicised matters.⁴⁸

It is in the light of this mesh between religion and politics that we must understand confessionalisation. The process of more precisely defining the denominational group against its adversaries and extending ecclesiastical discipline assumed an importance beyond the Church itself. The metrical books, hefty tomes denoting whether or not

⁴⁷ Mikhail Raevskii, an Orthodox priest, reported that Shestov had links with T. I. Filippov's Moscow circle and that the merchant fully supported the extension of the rights of *Edinoverie*. See TsANO, f. 570, op. 559 (1870), d. 15, l. 121-122.

⁴⁸ For the discussions of ascription in which our analysis is rooted, see P. Werth, "The Limits of Religious Ascription: Baptized Tatars and the Revision of 'Apostasy', 1840s – 1905," *Russian Review* 59, no. 4 (2000): 493–511; P. Werth, "Orthodox as Ascription (and Beyond): Religious Identity on the Edges of the Orthodox Community, 1740-1917," in V. A. Kivelson and R. H. Greene, eds., *Orthodox Russia. Belief and Practice under the Tsars*. (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), 239–51.

Orthodox parishioners had fulfilled their religious obligations by attending the mass and confession, were the typical tools of confessionalisation. They were key for the Church in asserting spiritual control over the flock but were also the principal way in which the state ascribed religious identity to individuals. Being marked as having received an Orthodox sacrament in the metrical books meant ascription to the Orthodox confession. Failure to fill the books in or their falsification was criminal. Thus, religious identity from the perspective of state and Church assumed a definition that was both bureaucratic and sacramental.

The process by which one joined *Edinoverie* reflected this mix of administration and the sacraments. New converts underwent what was called ‘the joining ritual’, which was made up of the sacrament of chrismation (confirmation) and a prayer taken from the rules of Platon whereby the convert denounced the schism and affirmed the legitimacy of the Orthodox Church.⁴⁹ They would then be noted in the metrical books as belonging to the *Edinoverie* parish. The system was more formally bureaucratised in 1876 when all the diocesan journals published a template that missionaries and priests should use to report conversions to the consistories.⁵⁰ The cleric would have to state that the ‘joining ritual’ had been performed and duly noted in the metrical books and that the convert had proven his or her belonging to *Edinoverie* by confessing, taking the Eucharist and ‘fulfilling other Christian duties.’ Therefore the official shape of *Edinoverie* was defined in three ways: bureaucratically via notation in the confessional books, sacramentally through chrismation and confession, and by submission to the rules of Platon via reading the prayer prescribed in the 1800 settlement. However, it was administrative ascription rather than sacramental behaviour that frequently determined the actions of the Nizhnii Novgorod consistory. When Nikolai Sergeev sought to join *Edinoverie* in 1891, he reported that he always went to the *Edinoverie* church for the Eucharist: in his mind, this meant he had converted.⁵¹ The consistory, however, disagreed since he was ascribed as Orthodox in the confessional books.⁵² The Synod itself showed the same priorities with its edict in 1881 when it *de facto* abolished the rule preventing the Orthodox from attending

⁴⁹ For a description see I. Nevestin, “Raskol’ v sele Poime i uchrezhdenie edinoveriia,” *Penzenskie eparkhial’nye vedomosti*, no. 12 (1868): 394.

⁵⁰ “Formy,” *Penzenskie eparkhial’nye vedomosti*, no. 11 (1876): 30–32.

⁵¹ TsANO, f. 570, op. 559 (1891), d. 92, l. 7.

⁵² *Ibid.*, l. 18.

a *Edinoverie* church for the sacraments: the modification stipulated that this would not make the Orthodox into *edinovertsy*.⁵³

Old Belief could pose a problem to such a system of confessional ascription. Rites of passage performed by schismatic ministers, particularly marriage and baptism, were denied legitimacy because they were not, and could not be, marked in the metrical books. This was highly problematic since it meant children of schismatic marriages would be deemed as bastards and thereby denied the right of inheritance. Some Old Belief concords adopted the practice of having Orthodox priests conduct their weddings and baptisms whilst continuing their own religious practices and ceremonies: thus, husbands, wives and children gained legitimacy in the eyes of the law whilst remaining in the schism. The *spasovtsy* were paradigmatic in this regard since they were defined precisely by this practice. Stefan Smirnov, a convert from this group, described it exactly as a ‘rather strange sect’ that ‘married and baptised children in the Orthodox Church but [Old Believer] preceptors [*nachetchiki i nachetchitsy*] buried the dead, commemorated them and performed services.’⁵⁴ Douglas Rogers has shown that the *pomortsy* priestless Old Believers in Perm’ province did very much the same thing in order to deflect the scrutiny of the imperial government during Nicholas I’s campaign to promote marriage within the Church, demonstrating that even priestless groups with a relatively severe attitude towards the Church and state did not necessarily eschew adapting to legal requirements if it could be utilised for their own benefit.⁵⁵ This did not necessarily conflict with their pre-existing theology or religious lives. Indeed, Rogers has argued that in the town of Sepych the strategy of marrying in Orthodox churches reinforced pre-existing religious practices and community divisions that were based upon the theological rejection of the fallen and sinful material world.⁵⁶

Thus Old Believers could be considered as Orthodox as far as the bureaucracies of the Church and state were concerned. They were registered in Orthodox metrical books because of their participation in the sacraments and that was the end of the matter. However, the Old Believers themselves felt differently. Their ascription was a pragmatic action undertaken to attain legal protection and not a statement of their religious

⁵³ RGIA, f, 796, op. 145, d. 2257, ll.111ob-113.

⁵⁴ S. Smirnov, *Zapiski sel'skogo sviashchennika. Dnevnikovye zapisi sviashchennosluzhitelia edinovercheskogo khrama arkhangela Mikhaila sela Mikhailovskaia sloboda protoiereia Stefana Smirnova, napisannye im samim s 1905 po 1933 god.*, ed. E. Sarancha (Moscow, 2008), 23.

⁵⁵ D. Rogers, *The Old Faith and the Russian Land. A Historical Ethnography of Ethics in the Urals*. (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2009), 35–70.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 68–69.

belonging. The clear cut definitions of religious identity that were based on the metrical books began to disintegrate once they reached the ground as confession clashed against conscience.

Edinoverie forced focus onto this issue. The fifth rule of Metropolitan Platon denied the right to join *Edinoverie* to all Orthodox except those had never attended a single sacrament of the Church. In other words, only those schismatics who had never made use of the aforementioned strategy of accommodation could make the conscious choice to be either Orthodox or *edinovertsy* upon conversion. This was a measure employed that was designed to strictly delineate and protect the boundaries of the Orthodox confession. The changes were made in 1832 and 1881 (whereby those noted in the metrical books as Orthodox could join *Edinoverie* if they had not taken a sacrament in ten or five years respectively) explicitly acknowledged the problem that the metrical books were not necessarily accurate measures of religious belonging and thus granted a limited space for conscience to begin defining an individual's religious identity. The 1886 secret edict that granted bishops the right to circumvent even the adapted fifth rule seemingly made this space rather expansive. These late nineteenth century modifications to the fifth rule meant that an individual could transfer to *Edinoverie* even if the metrical books said otherwise.

The entire situation was made all the more murky by the difficulties inherent in defining *Edinoverie*'s relationship with Orthodoxy. As the debates in the 1870s and 1880s had demonstrated, there were those who were now concerned that denying Orthodox the right to join *Edinoverie* demonstrated to all that it and Orthodoxy were not of one and the same confession. This questioned the Church's commitment to the re-evaluation of ritual and made *edinovertsy* doubt the validity of unity in faith. Denying transfer requests therefore was beginning to be seen as highly problematic by some members of the Church and, increasingly, the Synod itself. However, many remained of the opinion that *Edinoverie* did constitute something that remained outside of the borderline delineating the Orthodox confession. Movement to it constituted conversion, which had to be prevented.

The struggle over conversion brought the contradiction between confession and conscience inherent in the rules of Platon to the fore. On the one hand, there was the requirement to defend the boundaries of a strictly delineated Orthodox confession by preventing even those who declared themselves to be Old Believers from converting to *Edinoverie*. The metrical books remained the key instruments in defining official religious belonging. On the other, the Synod had conceded that Orthodoxy and

Edinoverie were one confession and thus began to ease restrictions on conversion, suggesting that the requirements of conscience, in this particular case, transcended bureaucratic ascription. This was the difficult terrain that individuals and institutions in Nizhnii Novgorod had to negotiate their way through between 1870 and 1905. The confessional divide between Orthodoxy and *Edinoverie* was both challenged and reinforced. In the process, petitioners and priests continually sought to define *Edinoverie*, Orthodoxy and Old Belief and their relations to one another.

Confession

The policy of the Nizhnii Novgorod consistory when meeting challenges to the confessional frontier in the late nineteenth century was to meticulously follow the letter of the law. When confronting petitions placed by those claiming to be Old Believers but who were noted in the metrical books as Orthodox, the consistory's response was to have them wait out the required period. This continued long after the Synod permitted local ecclesiastical administrations a degree of freedom in applying the fifth rule of Platon, demonstrating that the change in attitude at the highest levels of the Church had not percolated down to Nizhnii Novgorod before the beginning of the twentieth century.

This fact is reflected in word as well as in deed. Confessionalisation and its definition of Orthodoxy by the reformed rites coloured the terminology of conversion. The use of the various terms for 'conversion' (typically *perekhod* or *obrashchenie*) often dominated priestly complaints, triumphing over the neutral 'enumeration' (*perechislenie*), which was judged to be the politically correct term once the Synod embarked on its efforts to bring the *edinovertsy* wholly into the Orthodox confession.⁵⁷ Sometimes priests and the consistory thought the term 'conversion' too moderate and went directly for 'apostasy' (*otpadenie*). The terms 'conversion' and 'apostasy' actively imply that an individual is moving from one faith to another. Such terminology gave linguistic shape to the idea of a confessional divide between Orthodoxy and *Edinoverie*. 'Enumeration' on the other hand suggests movement within a single group since no borders are crossed and change is of degree rather than kind.

The cases in which 'conversion' and 'apostasy' were used dominate. Protophierarch Grigorii Guliaev described one large batch of petitions as nothing other than a 'new

⁵⁷ The term "conversion" was evidently still being used by 1912, since delegates at the first National *Edinoverie* Congress declared that movement from Orthodoxy to *Edinoverie* should be known as enumeration. *Pervyi Vserossiiskii s'ezd pravoslavnykh staroobriadtsev (edinovertsev)* (St. Petersburg, 1912), 228–229.

apostasy from Orthodoxy.⁵⁸ Even the consistory made use of this word, ruling on 23 August 1889 to forbid the construction of a new *Edinoverie* church because ‘this might serve as a reason for apostasy of persons from Orthodoxy and conversion (*perekhod*) to *Edinoverie*.’⁵⁹ The fact that this occurred some three years after the Synod had declared Orthodoxy and *Edinoverie* to be one and the same confession is startling proof that such an understanding was as yet very limited in its extent.

Sometimes the Orthodox clergy did not even bother to distinguish between *Edinoverie* and Old Belief. When some Old Believers and Orthodox faithful in the village of Rabotki asked to be allowed to form a new *Edinoverie* parish, the priest reacted by labelling the project as a demand for ‘an Old Believer church’ in which ‘they will convert not from the schism to *Edinoverie* but from Orthodoxy and thus the Old Believer church will serve to the detriment of Orthodoxy.’⁶⁰ When reviewing whether the *Edinoverie* school in Bol’shoe Murashkino, the director of the (secular) Nizhnii Novgorod schools board directly referred to Ivan Shestov as an Old Believer who had ‘no business educating any of the children of Orthodox parents.’ He concluded his letter with a sagacious warning: ‘Beware of Greeks bearing gifts! [*Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes*, his emphasis]’⁶¹ It is notable that the director did not once use the words ‘*Edinoverie*’ or ‘*edinovertsy*’ in his missive. Timofei Dobrozrakov, the *Edinoverie* superintendent in charge of Bol’shoe Murashkino, was in full concord with this kind of sentiment. Calling the institution ‘an Old Believer school,’ he was afraid that the inclusion of Orthodox children in the school would not only lead to the children converting but their parents as well.⁶² His view on the local *edinovertsy* was that they continuously tried to ‘tempt’ the Orthodox into ‘conversion’: among them he counted people who ‘in their souls are the purest schismatics.’⁶³ Dobrozrakov’s letter is peppered with the verbs ‘to convert’ (*perekhodit*) and ‘to seduce’ (*sovrashchit*).

Uses of the term *perechislenie* are much more rare. The consistory did not start to label the files of Orthodox applicants to *Edinoverie* with this term until after 1891. Of all the cases I surveyed, only one priest ever made use of the term. When Mikhail Raevskii, the Orthodox priest in Bol’shoe Murashkino, reviewed the school and the Povkrovskoe

⁵⁸ TsANO, f. 570, op. 559 (1891), d. 25, l. 54.

⁵⁹ Ibid., op. 559 (1888), d. 46, l. 13ob.

⁶⁰ Ibid., l. 7ob.

⁶¹ Ibid., op. 559 (1870), d. 15l. 116.

⁶² Ibid., l. 130.

⁶³ Ibid., l. 128.

brotherhood, he referred to the phenomena of Orthodox desiring to become *edinovertsy* with the term ‘enumeration.’ He thereby emphasised his generally positive outlook on the relationship between *Edinoverie* and Orthodoxy. He noted that although some of the older *edinovertsy* showed hostility to Orthodoxy, this had declined with time to the point that they allowed ‘those who cross themselves three fingers (*triperstniki*) to mutual liturgies and prayers; they allow the *Edinoverie* clergy to go with crosses[...]to Orthodox churches to meet the most honoured [local] holy icons; and they allow the Orthodox clergy the same in the *Edinoverie* church.’⁶⁴ Raevskii came much closer to seeing unity between these two branches of the Church. His mention of the joint ceremonies was an illustration that this unity existed in reality as well as in theory. Within his thinking, the confessional frontier was much less pronounced, although not necessarily non-existent.

The power of confessionalisation lay not only in shaping vocabularies but also entire narratives. What is noteworthy about the reports of the school director, Dobrozrakov and Raevskii in relation to Bol’shoe Murashkino’s school is that they all described the same situation in the same period but yet gave wildly conflicting descriptions. The first two ferociously condemned Shestov as a troublemaker and the *edinovertsy* as quasi-schismatics hostile to the Church. Dobrozrakov complained that the only reason the *edinovertsy* villagers ever invited Orthodox neighbours in their *izby* was to ‘tempt’ them to the schism. Thus, allowing Orthodox children into the school threatened Orthodoxy in the village and strengthened the schism. Raevskii, on the other hand, was entirely sympathetic both to Shestov and the teaching performed by the school, hence his emphasis on the good relations between the Orthodox and *edinovertsy* in Bol’shoe Murashkino. He also vindicated the Pokrovskoe brotherhood, claiming that it had no ‘propagandistic’ intentions. Confessional anxieties, or lack thereof, shaped the way in which the relationship between *Edinoverie* and Orthodoxy in a given locality was narrated for the benefit of the consistory.

As telling as terminology is for the views of the clergy, the actions undertaken by the consistory were the key way in which perceptions of confessional difference were formed among many of those who petitioned. This was especially the case after 1881 when a few formally Orthodox communities attempted to convert en-mass to *Edinoverie*, only to have their ambitions largely stymied. In the village of Uzhovo, the Orthodox parish church burnt down on 9 May 1890: this was part of several conflagrations which destroyed 80

⁶⁴ Ibid., I. 124.

homes in the village and left the residents without bread or horses.⁶⁵ This general poverty, five hundred individuals explained in their petition, left them without funds to build a new parish church. Therefore they asked to be joined to the unscathed *Edinoverie* church in their village. The consistory was unmoved by their plight since joining an entire parish to *Edinoverie* would ‘not only cool but also shake respect and reverence to the Orthodox Church, especially in those places where the population has long been infected by the schism.’⁶⁶ No doubt the fiscal motivations of the peasantry also played a role in the refusal.

So, the initial attempt failed. However, 233 people kept up the struggle, this time stating that they in reality belonged to the schism and had never been to an Orthodox church.⁶⁷ The consistory therefore ordered the Orthodox priest and two local superintendents to start assessing the metrical books and to conduct interviews with the parishioners. The consistory refused all those petitioners who had attended the sacraments in the past five years whilst granting the requests of those who had not. Each petitioner who had been refused then simply waited for the required time period to lapse before once again submitting a request which the consistory was bound by Synodal edict to grant: transfers were still being granted in 1897, some six years after the case had originally arisen.⁶⁸

This pattern occurred again and again in instances of enumeration. The consistory would deny the initial impulse, the parishioners would wait until five years had elapsed since their last confession and then would apply successfully. This happened to the Sapenin family in 1891. The Sapenins were individually joined to the *Edinoverie* parish over the course of at least five years, thereby spreading the confessional divide right down the centre of this peasant family. Spiridon, the paterfamilias, complained of an ‘unnatural division’ which ‘is contrary to God and is desired only by the [Orthodox] clergy of Nagavitsyno church for material reasons.’⁶⁹ Spiridon’s attack on the reasons of the clergy for refusing his request gives a sense of how transfer to *Edinoverie* was opposed by Orthodox priests fearful for their material wellbeing.

Challenges did not just emerge in cases of conversion. They might emerge when *Edinoverie* parishioners and priests were perceived as having crossed the confessional

⁶⁵ Ibid., op. 559 (1891), d. 25, l. 3. Uzhovo was in the south-eastern district of Lukoianov, one of the few areas in the province with a fully agricultural economy.

⁶⁶ Ibid., l. 8.

⁶⁷ Ibid. l. 63ob.

⁶⁸ Ibid., l. 117.

⁶⁹ TsANO, f. 570, op. 559 (1891), d. 27, l. 44-44ob.

divide in some illegitimate way. Ioann Shleev found himself in trouble when he was accused of ‘tempting’ the Orthodox Sergeev family of the parish of Selit’ba. As he explained to the consistory, he had been filling in for the sickly *Edinoverie* priest who died shortly after his arrival: he refused to allow the Sergeevs communion since they were not in the church’s metrical books. However, they reported that one of their family members was an ‘evil member of the Austrian priesthood’ who was trying to get them to convert, to which Shleev advised them to petition the bishop about joining *Edinoverie*.⁷⁰ He ended by pleading ‘although I am presently a *Edinoverie* priest, I am no less Orthodox in my heart and therefore for me to tempt [people] from Orthodoxy to *Edinoverie* would be worse than the kiss of Judas.’⁷¹ Shleev was ultimately acquitted by the consistory and the Sergeevs were told to stop petitioning under threat of ‘severe consequences.’⁷² However, it is telling that Shleev felt it necessary both to defend his commitment to Orthodoxy whilst at the same stating a rigid dedication to the division between Orthodoxy and *Edinoverie*. This may be either a deep internalisation of the confessional divide or a canny priest declaring his absolute submission to the view of the consistory.

A similar case is afforded by Nikolai Ternovskii, a *Edinoverie* priest accused of baptising the children of Orthodox parishioners and burying their dead. He retorted he had done so because the children were severely ill and that the parishioners would bury their dead unsupervised if he did not agree to participate.⁷³ All of this had been done with the knowledge and permission of the Orthodox priest, yet the consistory ruled that Ternovskii was not to perform such sacraments in the future. Only when he pointed out in his appeal that this went against consistorial regulations obligating priests to baptise sick children as soon as possible did the diocesan administration allow Ternovskii to do so as long he obtained full written permission from his Orthodox counterpart.⁷⁴ This affair was about administrative control as well as the line between Orthodoxy and *Edinoverie*. The officials in the consistory were probably just as annoyed by the failure of the two priests to get official sanction for their agreement as they were at the affront of a *Edinoverie* priest performing the baptismal and funerary sacraments for Orthodox believers.

Equally, the flaunting of prominence and wealth by the *edinovertsy* might serve to contest the confessional frontier. This was the case in the town of Spasskoe. The *edinovertsy*

⁷⁰ TsANO, f. 570, op. 559 (1891), d. 92, l. 11ob.

⁷¹ Ibid., l. 12ob.

⁷² Ibid., l. 18ob.

⁷³ Ibid., d. 91, l. 5ob – 6.

⁷⁴ Ibid., l. 36ob.

were planning the construction of a huge new church in the central square, one that would be large enough to hold up to 800 individuals. Its size and the visibility of its proposed location led the Orthodox priests to complain that ‘the parishioners of the Orthodox church are inclined to *Edinoverie* by their love of the old rituals. A sumptuous *Edinoverie* church built alongside the Orthodox one will attract Orthodox parishioners who by their visits may easily deviate to *Edinoverie*’: this was presented by the clergy as nothing other than ‘harm’ for the cause of Orthodoxy, a threat to ‘the integrity of the parish.’⁷⁵ This case highlights the way in which the prominence and organisation of the *edinovertsy* in some areas of Nizhnii Novgorod worked against them. The very fact that they had the funds and the wherewithal to plan such a considerable church made them the object of fear and suspicion from the side of the Orthodox clergy, afraid for their parishioners and for their emoluments.

Were there any signs in this period that the project to integrate *Edinoverie* and Orthodoxy into a single confession had reached diocesan level? There were very few indeed. The vast majority of the clergy and even the consistory continued to prefer terms like ‘conversion’ and ‘apostasy’ deep into the 1890s. On occasion, we can detect some influence of the theological debates ongoing in Moscow and Petersburg. The parishioners of Rabotki paraphrased part of the re-interpretation of the anathemas when they promised not to attach ‘any sophistry harmful to the Holy Apostolic Orthodox Church’ to the old rituals, thus reflecting the division between thought and action that was part of the re-evaluation of ritual.⁷⁶ Equally, one priest on reviewing the Somovki parish noted that the *edinovertsy* ‘are all convinced of the fact that one can equally be saved in this or the other church.’⁷⁷ There are also one or two instances of mutual communions and cross processions being performed, such as that which we noted earlier in Bol’shoe Murashkino. Only in 1905 did Vladimir Serebrovskii declare himself in favour of the full demolition of the confessional boundary, although the terms he used are revealing:

With the declaration of the freedom of the schism and with recognition [...] of schismatic marriages and baptisms, it is necessary to anticipate mass apostasy from the Orthodox Church to the schism. For keeping many in the bosom of the Church it would now follow to destroy any limits for conversion to *Edinoverie* so that the lovers of strictness and

⁷⁵ Ibid., op. 559 (1897), d. 83, l. 1ob.

⁷⁶ Ibid., op. 559 (1888), d. 46, l. 2ob-3.

⁷⁷ Ibid., op. 559 (1882), d. 37, l. 62ob.

church spirit in the liturgy can without obstacle satisfy their taste and do not have to leave the Church.⁷⁸

This comment was made to bishop Nazarii as the well-publicised discussions surrounding the Edict of Religious Toleration were underway. Only when the Old Believers were about to receive full freedom could a Nizhnii Novgorod priest contemplate striking a deathblow to Platon's fifth rule. The recognition that 'schismatic marriages and baptisms' would now be legitimate in the eyes of the law was recognition of the limits of bureaucratic ascription. Serebovskii was essentially admitting that a substantial proportion of the flock were Orthodox only on the pages of the metrical books because of Old Believer stratagems to legitimate their unions and thus their offspring. Once such stratagems were no longer needed, mass apostasy was to be expected.

Therefore we get an impression of just how vigilantly the consistory policed the confessional boundary between Orthodoxy and *Edinoverie* between 1870 and 1905. They followed the letter of the law exactly, a time consuming process since it required repeated checks of the metrical books by multiple church officials and the processing of numerous petitions. In the mean time, family groups and communities were divided whilst they hung around for the necessary five-year waiting period to conclude. Other mitigating circumstances were almost entirely ignored. The destruction of the Orthodox parish church and complete poverty of the parishioners in Uzhovo was nothing compared to the possibility that the 'esteem and reverence' of the Church might be lowered. It is through instances similar to these that we can see the way in which the consistory gave life to Platon's rules and the confessional boundaries inherent within them. Even as the Synod began to shift away from these rules, the consistory continued to vigilantly observe them, cracking down on priests and parishioners who dared to try and cross the boundary even for the purpose of burying the departed or baptising children on the threshold of death. If the Synod had intended its reform of 1881 to further integrate the *edinovertsy* within the Orthodox confession, it had failed. The arbitrary conclusion of so many such affairs can have left neither parishioners nor priests aware of the gulf that existed between *Edinoverie* and Orthodoxy.

Conscience

The importance of religious ascription via the metrical books for the consistory's decision-making process should now be clear. In many of the above cases, the believers

⁷⁸ Ibid., f. 570, op. 559, d. 16, l. 3ob.

themselves claimed to be Old Believers who wanted to join the Church on the basis of *Edinoverie*. The consistory responded by thoroughly checking the metrical books, often several times. On one occasion that revolved around the request to open a *Edinoverie* parish in the town of Ventsa, the metrical books were inspected no less than five times by three individuals in the space of a year and a half.⁷⁹ If any individual was ascribed in the metrical books, then they were considered Orthodox and were made subject to the waiting period prescribed by the Synod. Individual protestations to the contrary had no affect.

However, this is not to say that the consistory did not go to some efforts to collect other information about the would-be *edinovertsy*. Investigating priests were dispatched to conduct interviews and to find out the reasons behind the requests as well as to check the metrical books. Indeed, these interviews were often meticulous, recounting the declarations of each individual applicant. However, the argument that the petitioners were ‘in reality’ Old Believers cut no more ice than other factors. Ternovskii, the *Edinoverie* priest investigated for baptising Orthodox children, argued that such peasants appealing to him for the sacraments ‘does not serve as proof that they are converting from Orthodoxy to *Edinoverie* but rather proves that many of the peasants of Somovki have begun to leave their schismatic convictions in favour of *Edinoverie*.’⁸⁰ The consistory ignored this. Internal convictions of the parishioners were not a concern whilst there existed a more bureaucratic way of determining religious identity.

In strong contrast to the decisions of the consistory, the petitions themselves are awash in the language of conscience (*sovest*). The petitioners frequently stated that their desire to join *Edinoverie* was caused by the trouble inflicted on their consciences when they thought about the sacraments and the lack of a proper clergy. F. A. Shkinev, a peasant from Kuzminki, declared that the petitions of his family emerged from a need for the ‘cleansing of conscience’ and the desire ‘to go where conscience and the old rituals draw us.’⁸¹ The villagers of Rabotki talked about how ‘we are aware in our consciences that without the Holy Church salvation [...] is not possible, that the life giving aid of the holy Christian sacraments is necessary for eternal life,’ also mentioning how the rituals (*obriadnosti*) ‘calm the troubled consciences of the Old Believers and then attract many

⁷⁹ Ibid., op. 559 (1892), d. 104.

⁸⁰ Ibid., op. 559 (1891), d. 91, l. 7.

⁸¹ RGIA, f. 796, op. 164, d. 1327, l. 1-1ob.

apostates of the flock into the bosom of the Holy Apostolic Church.’⁸² They also directly contested the bureaucratic ascription of religious identity by stating that ‘according to the [metrical] books, all the parishioners number more than a thousand souls, but very few, no more than fifty two people, take the holy sacraments.’⁸³ Ivan Sergeev gave a nod to Platon’s attached opinions when he declared that it was impossible for him ‘by reason of weak conscience to leave them [the old rituals] and accept the new corrected ones.’⁸⁴ The saturation of petitions with this language demonstrates the importance of religious conviction and ritual choice to the arguments of the applicants.

Ritual preference was often mentioned with reference to ancestral tradition. The petitions would state the applicant’s adherence to the old rituals. The declaration of the villagers of Urasov that ‘we are all in general more inclined (*sklonny*) to the old rituals given to us from our ancestors’ is typical, demonstrating the role of tradition in the constitution of religious identity.⁸⁵ The same can be seen from the petition of V. P. Korotkin, a peasant in Varmalei: ‘we and our ancestors were always more inclined to see the rituals in God’s church [performed] by the old book and not by that such as they have in the Orthodox church of God. But we know that without God’s church a person cannot be saved.’⁸⁶

There would also be a statement in which the individual concerned would declare his or her realisation that the Orthodox Church and its priesthood was legitimate. The priestless community of Ventsa in its petition for a *Edinoverie* church stated that they ‘all recognise that without repentance and the priesthood there is no salvation and have come to the conviction that it is best to join to the faith recognised by the law.’⁸⁷ Those last two words are very telling, a sign that legal acceptance may have been just as important a reason for conversion as the recognition of the necessity of priests.

Practical concerns were also sometimes mentioned, although they were downplayed, perhaps out of fear that the consistory would think less of material motivations. Distance to the local Orthodox church frequently was mentioned. The peasants of Ventsa and

⁸² TsANO, f. 570, op. 559 (1888), d. 46, l. 2-2ob

⁸³ Ibid., op. 559 (1888), d. 46, l. 1ob.

⁸⁴ Ibid., op. 599 (1881), d. 17, l. 1ob.

⁸⁵ Ibid., op. 559 (1873), d. 53, l. 2.

⁸⁶ Ibid., op. 559 (1881), d. 30, l. 1.

⁸⁷ Ibid., op. 559 (1892), d. 104, l. 1-1ob.

Vileiki presented the fact that the nearest Orthodox churches were nine and thirteen versts distant respectively in order to justify their request for a new *Edinoverie* parish.⁸⁸

The petitions suggest that applicants understood *Edinoverie* on the basis of two interconnected sets of conditions. The first related to the old rituals or, more precisely, the ability to practice them without hindrance. The second related to a more theological category, that of the legitimacy of the Church and its priesthood. This legitimacy manifested itself in the sacraments, particularly the Eucharist. For instance, the petitioners of the village of Rabotki paraphrased John 6:54 ('whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day') to drive home the recognition of their own errors and the canonicity of the Orthodox Church.⁸⁹

However, the validity of the Church and its sacraments often take second place in the petitions compared to declarations of adherence to the old rituals. As the reviews of the metrical books attest, most applicants had already been taking at least some of the sacraments in previous years, a fact that they misrepresented because they were aware of the importance of documentation for the consistory's policy of defining membership of the Church. However, the applicants doubted in the efficacy of the sacraments as a vessel for the grace of God because they were performed by the Nikonian rituals. In one meeting held by a clerical investigator with those who wanted to convert, the local church elder stated that he considered his baptism by the new rituals invalid: only when he joined Old Belief and was re-baptised did he receive the true grace of God.⁹⁰ What made the sacraments, and therefore *Edinoverie*, legitimate in the eyes of the would-be converts was the fact that they occurred within the framework of an institution that granted legitimacy to the old rituals.

In other words, what *Edinoverie* represented for many believers and converts was not the beginning of a new identity, be it Orthodox or some kind of distinctly *Edinoverie* one, or even necessarily new religious behaviours but rather a continuation of Old Believer identity and worship within the Orthodox Church with access both to salvation through the sacraments and legal recognition from the side of the secular and ecclesiastical authorities. It was official Old Belief. Father Vladimir Serebrovskii hit the nail on the head when he wrote that '*Edinoverie* gives the opportunity to be an Old Believer and at

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid., op. 559 (1888), d. 46, l. 2.

⁹⁰ Ibid., op. 559 (1892), d. 104, l. 66ob.

the same time [part of] the flock of the Orthodox Church.’⁹¹ Ritual remained a crucial point around which religious identity was constructed in Nizhnii Novgorod. As one group of self described schismatics stated, they were ‘by ritual [part] of Orthodox Christianity [*po obriadu pravoslavnogo Khrisitanstva*]’ and therefore should be joined ‘to the *Edinoverie* church.’⁹² Since Orthodox, *edinovertsy*, and Old Believers all made use of the pre-Nikonian rites, it is no wonder that the lines between the three blurred and dissolved at ground level. The confused situation was physically represented in the village of Ventsa. When the priest sent to investigate asked the Orthodox and the schismatics to divide into groups, the *volost’* judge ‘joined neither the Orthodox nor the schismatics, declaring that he did not belong to one or the other.’⁹³

The attempts to transfer or convert to *Edinoverie* demonstrate is a clash over conceptions of religious identity. The consistory argued that the only firm and fast way to determine the membership within the flock was on the basis of records of having officially taken the sacraments from the Church from an Orthodox priest. This meant the metrical books proffered a way of assigning members to one group or another, to Orthodoxy or heterodoxy. Among peasant believers, however, the central issues were the interconnected matters of conscience and ritual, the latter being dictated by the former. Therefore this was clash between a voluntaristic definition of religion and a confessional one, the former sanctifying the choice of the individual believer and the latter reifying the requirement of state and church to form distinct confessional groups as a method for social control. Ironically, both ideas received confirmation within the rules of *Edinoverie*. The firm dividing line between Orthodoxy and *Edinoverie* created by prohibiting conversion from the former to the latter embodied a confessional definition of religion in which social discipline was at stake. However, the Synod’s subsequent modifications to the rules conceded the idea that the metrical books were not infallible methods of denoting religious identity. It was possible, after a sufficient period of time, to ignore the books and concede those who were bureaucratically ascribed to Orthodoxy the right to convert to *Edinoverie*.

Conclusion

This chapter had two major goals. The first was to examine *Edinoverie* in Nizhnii Novgorod, to situate it among the hills and forests of the diocese and wonder how factors

⁹¹ Ibid., op. 559 (1904), d. 16, l. 3ob.

⁹² Ibid., op. 559 (1891), d. 25, l. 51

⁹³ Ibid., op. 559 (1892), d. 104, l. 64.

like population, the lie of the land and clerical demographics gave shape to the burgeoning phenomena. The large presence of Old Believers and a concentrated campaign of conversion in the 1840s rendered the region fertile ground for the blossoming of *Edinoverie*. By the end of the nineteenth century, the number of *edinovertsy* and monastic institutions in the province was unmatched anywhere else in central Russia. The city's role as a commercial hub, fostered by its position on an important river system, granted the leading *Edinoverie* merchants a substantive amount of wealth that they were able to pump into their parishes and led to an almost unparalleled level of community organisation. It is no coincidence that the 1877 petition that led to the Synod's amendments to the rules of Platon was written by an assembly meeting at the famous Nizhnii Novgorod trade fair. Given this, it is not surprising that the pattern of *Edinoverie* parishes closely mirrored the river network, pointing to the importance of the merchants as local founders and benefactors. The centrepiece was undoubtedly Bol'shoe Murashkino.

The *Edinoverie* priesthood of the diocese were also becoming ever more distinguished from their Orthodox counterparts by the form of their education, with almost half of all *Edinoverie* priests having only informal schooling by 1904. With the vast majority of clergy coming from the region itself, a rising number of peasants in their number, and the emergence of priestly families, they formed a relatively cohesive group that possessed expert local knowledge of their parishes and strong links with their communities. Such may be the reason why we see no complaints emerging from the parishioners about their pastors in this period. The clergy also behaved in a manner that did not require consistorial or episcopal intervention: their records are essentially spotless.

All of these factors combined to give *Edinoverie* in Nizhnii Novgorod its own distinctive character. Local conditions interacted with the general factors of the phenomenon to produce something unique to the lands betwixt the Volga and the Oka. Such tells us that we should be cautious when making generalisations about *Edinoverie*. It also goes some way to confirming my argument that *Edinoverie* was predominately characterised by provincial conditions. It also points to the limitations of that argument: the formative role of the rules of Platon, Shestov's links with Moscow and the Synod's occasional intrusion all demonstrate that the local was connected with the national.

The second aim has been to trace the formation of a confessional contour, the transformation of Platon's prohibition into a mountainous dividing line aimed at separating the *edinovertsy* from the Orthodox and vice versa. Here we noted how

language and bureaucratic ascription gave shape to the confessional boundary, in the process splitting families and communities apart. There can be little doubt that such action helped cultivate a sense of religious difference. How could the *edinovertsy* not be aware that they were treated differently when their priests were often investigated for ‘tempting’ Orthodox believers into ‘apostasy’ and their school was prohibited from accepting Orthodox children? This undermined the aim of *Edinoverie*, the creation of unity in faith, and it continued to be undermined even as the Synod and some of the bishops began to assert real effort to forging *Edinoverie* and Orthodoxy into one confession. There is certainly precious little sign of that effort ever reaching Nizhnii Novgorod. The consistory rigidly applied the letter of the law, using the metrical books to measure how long it had been since each applicant had gone to take the sacraments.

This bureaucratic definition of religious belonging clashed with a deeply confusing situation on the ground where sacramental behaviour did not necessarily indicate whether individuals felt themselves to be members of the Orthodox Church, especially since certain Old Believer groups used baptism and marriage as a strategy to legitimate their familial bonds in the eyes of the secular authorities. On the ground it was ritual that predominated ideas of identity with notions about canonical legitimacy or illegitimacy coming in second place. The attraction of *Edinoverie* was that it allowed the old rituals to be used whilst granting membership of the Church. It was perceived as official Old Belief, Old Belief protected by law and blessed with an apostolic priesthood. Necessarily, therefore, the confessional understanding of religion embodied within the rules of Platon clashed with another principle originating in that very same settlement, the idea that rituals were an important enough locus of religious identity to be a matter of individual choice.

The encounter was between a voluntaristic understanding of religion and a confessional one, a battle that was being increasingly fought out elsewhere in Russia as discourses of religious tolerance and freedom of conscience began to challenge the confessional understanding of religion upon which the tsarist system of imperial control and social discipline was based. As far as *Edinoverie* in Nizhnii Novgorod is concerned, it was the confessional idea that won out. The border that restricted freedom of ritual choice was rigidly maintained up to 1905 and only the looming threat of profound toleration for Old Belief moved some to plead for the frontier’s abolition.

Part II

Confessional Clashes

So let us stop fighting with shadows, let us stop hurting ourselves in the big things while we are indulging our rivalry over the small...To rend asunder the Church, to be ready for rivalry, to create dissension, to rob oneself continuously of the benefits of religious meetings – these are unpardonable, these do demand an accounting, these do deserve serious punishment – St. John Chrysostom, *Against the Jews*, Homily 3, 13-14.

VI: The Era of Tolerance, 1905-1917

April 1905 liberated the hands and opened the lips of the edinovertsy. - Father Simeon Ivanovich Shleev, 1910.¹

The law of the 17 April [1905] was a direct restraint on the life of the edinovertsy, a violation of their consciences. Heretics and the Old Believers were given freedom – why bind the edinovertsy and fail to give them freedom? – A missionary of Samara diocese, 14 June 1908.²

Introduction

The Blood of the Hundreds

Near the town of Voronok in Chernigov province, there was a holy spring. By ‘long established custom,’ the *edinovertsy* and the Orthodox of the town would form religious processions to the spring in order to bless the waters and collect some for use in local churches. However on 6 January 1906 when the parishioners tried to fulfil this long-standing ceremony, they arrived at the spring to find a crowd of Old Believers were waiting for them: ‘many from the crowd of Old Believers shouted at the Orthodox: “Ah, here are the Mazepas! Look here, we have re-blessed your waters” and other insulting words.’³ The term ‘Mazepas’, meaning traitors, was directed precisely at the *edinovertsy* in the procession.⁴ All of this, a later *Edinoverie* petition argued, was because the new law of religious toleration had emboldened the Old Believers. Not only did they ‘openly mock the beliefs of the Orthodox but in particular the Old Believers were hostile to the *edinovertsy*.’⁵

The matter did not end with the spring. Later in the same year, the Old Believers of the neighbouring town of Elionka sent a petition to the Council of Ministers asking for two churches to be returned to them, a stone one which remained in their town and a wooden one which had been subsequently taken to Voronok.⁶ They had been seized from the Old Believers in 1846 and been given to the new *Edinoverie* parishes. The *edinovertsy* in their counter-petition argued that the parishioners themselves had seized the churches as they ‘did not want exiled priests but legal ones with the blessing of the Church.’ The

¹ S. Shleev, *Edinoverie v svoem vnutrennem razvitii. (V raz’iasnenie ego malorasprostranennosti sredi staroobriadtsev)*. (St. Petersburg, 1910), 232.

² RGIA, f. 796, op. 190, VI otd., 3 st., d. 20, l. 5.

³ RGIA, f. 796, op. 190, VI otd., 3 st., d. 95, l. 9ob.

⁴ The term derives from Ivan Mazepa, the ataman of Ukraine who defected to the side of Swedes in 1708 during the Great Northern War (1700-1721).

⁵ *Ibid.*, l. 9.

⁶ *Ibid.*, l. 2.

leaders of the Elionka Old Believers had now ‘lost any faith and fearlessly [will] say any lie’ in order to get the churches back. For instance, they had claimed that there were barely any *edinovertsy* in the region and so the churches had fallen into disuse.⁷ Most alarmingly, the *edinovertsy* stated that the Old Believers were convinced that the 1905 Edict of Religious Toleration meant that they would be able to reclaim all the *Edinoverie* churches. The panic in their plea to the government is palpable: ‘even if they don’t give back all the churches but just one, then there will be great sorrow for all. Then the blood of the *edinovertsy* will flow in all parishes in general but in Voronok in particular where the *edinovertsy* number in the hundreds but the Old Believers in the thousands: the hundreds will be beaten to death for the truth and for their beloved holies.’⁸

The story of Voronok reflects the broader challenge that *Edinoverie* and Orthodoxy faced after the passage of the Edict of Religious Toleration on 17 April 1905. Its provisions firstly emancipated the Old Believers, giving them almost the same privileges as other Christian confessions. Secondly, they legalised apostasy from the Orthodox Church. A person could now freely transfer to another Christian faith or even a non-Christian one, if they could prove that they or their ancestors had belonged to it previously. The Church was confronted by an assertive and fully legalised schism at the same time that its flock were given the right to defect. This was doubly problematic for *Edinoverie*. Given that a substantial proportion of its members were so in name only meant that mass apostasy was a very real probability. No less than this, the Old Believers were using their newly found public voice to demand a return of the property that had been sequestered over the course of the nineteenth century. Since most of these items were in the hands of the *edinovertsy*, their communities faced the possibility of being deprived of buildings, icons and books that had become an intrinsic part of their religious lives. The question had to be posed: how could *Edinoverie* be kept attractive in the era of tolerance? How could apostasy be prevented and new converts won?

Over the next few chapters, I examine the replies that were offered to these questions. They can be placed into two broad categories. The Synod and other high level church authorities backed the plan of confessional integration that had been proposed by Subbotin and Pavel in the 1880s. They sought to abolish the most egregious rules of Platon and thus finally end the confessional borders that had kept the *edinovertsy* and Orthodox apart. However, this approach was contested by a group of *Edinoverie*

⁷ RGIA, f. 796, op. 190, VI otd., 3 st., d. 95, l. 9ob.

⁸ Ibid., l. 11ob.

reformers, led by the Petersburg priest Simeon Shleev. Shleev proposed a radical scheme intended to further institutionalise the old rites whilst at the same time uniting the scattered *edinovertsy* into a single group with a centralised administrative order. What was most alarming for many members of the Church was that Shleev foresaw the breaking of links between Orthodoxy and *Edinoverie* on all but the highest levels of Church management.

This plan of separatist confessionalisation is fully detailed and analysed in chapter VII. The purpose of the present chapter is to investigate how toleration radically affected the relationship between Church and state and how this fundamental alteration impacted upon the fate of *Edinoverie*. I also will assess the outreach of Church and *Edinoverie* leaders to certain Old Believer concords and consider why they ended in failure. When taken together, all of these strands provide a picture of how *Edinoverie* and the Church strove to adjust to the era of tolerance.

The Consequences of Confessionalisation

Church and State

The confessional era of Nicholas I had left the Church with a conflicted legacy. It was dependent on the support of the state for persecuting its religious enemies, particularly the Old Believers, the sectarians and the Uniates. This support had come with a price, namely the direct interference of the government in many domains where the Church had previously claimed exclusive rights. This was particularly burdensome in the matter of reform. A significant number of prelates and priests had come to the conclusion by the end of the nineteenth century that considerable changes had to be made to the existing relationship between Church and state if Orthodoxy was to succeed in its mission to the Russian people.⁹ However, it found these reform impulses thwarted by the state, which put its interests first and those of the Church second.

The tenure of Konstantin Pobedonostsev had made that problematic inheritance stark. The utterly pious Pobedonostsev had made some favourable changes, including the

⁹ For increasing episcopal discontent over the nineteenth century, see J. D. Basil, *Church and State in Late Imperial Russia: Critics of the Synodal System of Church Government (1861-1914)* (University of Minnesota, 2005), 7–33. For support of the restoration of the patriarchate, see V. M. Lavrov et al., eds., *Ierarkhiia Russkoi pravoslavnoi tserkvi, patriarshestvo i gosudarstvo v revoliutsionnoi epokhu* (Moscow, 2008).

convention of two bishops' councils in 1885 and 1887.¹⁰ However, he was a strict adherent of the Petrine Synodal order and sought to prevent even the formation of opposition. He went so far as to ban new bishops lunching with the Metropolitan of St. Petersburg when they arrived in the capital to be consecrated.¹¹ Most notorious was the practice of moving bishops between sees frequently to prevent them from establishing roots in their dioceses: between 1880 and 1894, there were 48 episcopal transfers.¹² Where possible he sought to appoint political quietists to key positions, hence his decision to make Antonii (Vadkovskii) Metropolitan of St. Petersburg in 1900.¹³

Antonii was thus the highest-ranking prelate when the crisis of 1905 broke over the Russian state. With social unrest growing at a startling rate, Russia's most senior statesman Sergei Witte decided to widen religious tolerance in order to garner more support for the flagging regime. In December 1904, the Tsar declared that the legislation regarding Old Belief would be subjected to a thorough review.¹⁴ In the following January, Antonii was invited to sit on the commission. Rather than try to oppose the measures that would liberate the Church's most substantial enemy, Antonii actually supported them. When it came to abolishing the law that criminalised apostasy, he declared 'from the side of the Orthodox Church, there is no obstacle to the abolition of the law forbidding apostasy from Orthodoxy, if such an abolition will be resolved in accordance to the advantage and justice of the state.'¹⁵ This was not a sudden change of heart. The Metropolitan had already voiced his concerns about the Synodal order to Nicholas II in 1903.¹⁶

The fruit Witte and Antonii's co-operation emerged in March 1905 when the Metropolitan, with the backing of the Synod, penned the 'Witte memorandum,' a document to Emperor Nicholas II declaring the need for an expansion of religious toleration, the summoning of a Church Council, and the abolition of the post of ober-procurator.¹⁷ Antonii gambled that by sacrificing the state's support in the Church's

¹⁰ For a balanced account of Pobedonostsev's tenure, see A. Iu. Polunov, *K. P. Pobedonostsev v obshchestvenno-politicheskoi i dukhovnoi zhizni Rossii* (Moscow, 2010).

¹¹ S. I. Alekseeva, *Sviatishii sinod v sisteme vysshikh i tsentral'nykh gosudarstvennykh uchrezhdenii poreformnoi Rossii 1856-1904 gg.*, 2nd ed. (St. Petersburg, 2006), 63.

¹² A. I. Koniuchenko, *Arkhieiskii korpus Russkoi pravoslavnoi tserkvi vo vtoroi polvine XIX- nachale XX veka: issledovaniia i materialy* (Chelabinsk, 2005), 24.

¹³ Basil, *Church and State*, 22.

¹⁴ *Zhurnaly komiteta ministrov po ispolneniiu ukaza 12 dekabria 1904 g.* (St. Petersburg, 1905), 3–7.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 159–160.

¹⁶ S. Dixon, "The Russian Orthodox Church in Imperial Russia, 1721-1917," in M. Angold, ed., *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, vol. 5 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 341.

¹⁷ Basil, *Church and State*, 23.

struggle with rivals, he could compel the government to allow the internal reforms required to make Orthodoxy competitive, which in turn would necessitate a new relationship between Church and state. Antonii also permitted a group of thirty-two Petersburg clerics to submit a petition to Nicholas calling for broad reforms.¹⁸

The result was the Edict of Religious Toleration on 17 April 1905. Half of its provisions related to Old Belief. They gained the right to openly conduct their liturgical ceremonies, to be called 'Old Believers,' to allow the building of churches, chapels and prayer houses, to liberate Old Believer ministers from military service, and to give them the same rights as other Christian confessions when they entered into marriages with the Orthodox. The only thing that the law still forbade was for the Old Believer ministers to wear the same priestly garments as the Orthodox clergy or use the ranks of the Church's hierarchy. Thus Old Believers found that their position had dramatically improved. They could now confess their religion openly. It was not senseless for the Orthodox prelates to state that 'the new law gives complete freedom to non-Orthodox propaganda.'¹⁹ However, the most radical point of the new laws was the first paragraph where it was stated that anyone belonging to a Christian confession could freely convert to another.²⁰ Given that the new law moved Old Belief up the hierarchy of Russia's confessional system almost to the level of a Christian faith, this meant that conversion could be freely be allowed from Orthodoxy, and thus *Edinoverie*, to the schism.

Pobedonostsev, completely outmanoeuvred by Antonii and Witte, launched a last ditch attempt to procrastinate in July by demanding that all of the diocesan prelates be consulted before reform of the Church begin. However, virtually all of the bishops responded by demanding an end to the Synodal order and a restoration of the patriarchate.²¹ Pobedonostsev, his position now untenable, resigned in late 1905 and the Pre-Conciliar Commission began to meet in 1906 to formulate a programme of action for the Council. Whilst it kept on meeting into 1907, and again in 1912, it was ultimately to no effect. Nicholas broke his promise and no Council was ever convened. Antonii had

¹⁸ "O neobkhodimosti peremen v Russkom tserkovnom upravlenii," *Tserkovnyi vestnik*, no.11 (1905): 321–25.

¹⁹ V. Chaplin and et al., eds., *Otzyvy eparkhial'nykh arkhierееv po voprosu o tserkovnoi reforme* (Moscow, 2004), 632–633.

²⁰ PSZ, vol. XXV, 237.

²¹ For the reviews of the prelates and a thorough analysis of their contents, see Chaplin and et al., *Otzyvy* and J. W. Cunningham, *A Vanquished Hope: The Movement for Church Renewal in Russia, 1905-1906* (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1981), 134–204.

gambled and lost. The Church had been deprived of the state's sword but it had not gained the liberty to reform.

The reaction to toleration from most of the Church was one of fear for the future. They were not wrong to be concerned. Eugene Avrutin has suggested that between 1905 and 1912, 250,000 people returned to Catholicism, 50,000 to Islam and hundreds to Judaism.²² The October Manifesto of 1905 also promised a commitment to freedom of conscience, suggesting that Russian state was willing to go further than it had in April. While that promise was never fulfilled and the administrative mechanisms by which toleration was implemented remained confused and contradictory, the floodgates were now definitively open.²³

The Church was also confronted by radicalism from within its own ranks. The Church's mission to Petersburg's swelling proletariat led some clergy to identify closely with the concerns of their flock. One such priest, Georgii Gapon, had turned to radical politics as a solution to their poverty and powerlessness and was partially backed in this by Antonii (Vadkovskii).²⁴ This resulted in Gapon leading the workers to the gates of the Winter Palace on 22 January 1905 in a peaceful protest for reform. The soldiers of the Tsar answered with bullets and bayonets. Detestation of Gapon's actions precipitated a sharp swing to the right in the Church. Antonii found himself isolated from the rest of the hierarchs and the imperial court. He spent the years before his death in 1912 fighting desperate rear guard actions to prevent the Church from backing the nationalist Union of the Russian People.²⁵ The Union for Church Regeneration, the successor group of the thirty-two Petersburg priests, was in an even worse position. Its leaders, like Father Grigorii Petrov, Antonin (Granovskii), and Mikhail (Semenov) found themselves respectively defrocked, sent to a monastery, or driven into the waiting arms of the schism by 1908.²⁶ The impulse of the Church was not to seek the wide-ranging changes but to constantly strive for the restoration of state protection. As Gurii of Simbirsk put it in his

²² E. M. Avrutin, "Returning to Judaism after the 1905 Law on Religious Freedom in Tsarist Russia," *Slavic Review* 65, no. 1 (2006): 90.

²³ P. Werth, "Arbiters of Free Conscience: State, Religion, and the Problem of Confessional Transfer after 1905," in M. D. Steinberg and H. J. Coleman, eds., *Sacred Stories: Religion and Spirituality in Modern Russia* (Indiana, 2007).

²⁴ J. E. Hedda, *His Kingdom Come: Orthodox Pastorship and Social Activism in Revolutionary Russia* (University of Chicago Press, 2007), 126–152.

²⁵ M. Agursky, "Caught in a Cross Fire: The Russian Church between Holy Synod and Radical Right, 1905–1908," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 59, no. 1 (1984).

²⁶ E. E. Roslof, *Red Priests: Renovationism, Russian Orthodoxy, and Revolution, 1905–1946* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 8 and S. Dixon, "Archimandrite Mikhail (Semenov) and Russian Christian Socialism," *Historical Journal* 51, no. 3 (2008): 705–707.

diocesan review after the Edict of Toleration, 'all civil and criminal laws guarding the faith of followers of the Russian Orthodox Catholic Church and her ruling position in the Orthodox Russian state should remain inviolable and enforced.'²⁷

State and Schism

The reactionary politics of the Church in the period after 1905 were partially provoked by the Russian government's stance on Old Belief. Witte was replaced by Petr Stolypin, a conservative statesman who sought reforms in order to give the imperial state the strength to survive. In his quest to shore up the autocracy, he sought to ameliorate the positions of religious minorities so as to remove them as potential sources of opposition.²⁸ He thus attempted to use the Duma, the new Russian parliament, to push through further reforms relating to freedom of conscience in general and the rights of the schismatics in particular. Peter Waldron has described the struggle between Stolypin and the Church on this particular issue in some depth and I need not repeat his arguments here. The essential conclusion is that the Church successfully mobilised its supporters on the right and in the imperial court to obstruct any further concessions to Old Belief in the Duma.²⁹ However, I can offer a new insight into one aspect of this conflict that had direct consequences for the *edinovertsy*: the issue of Old Believer property.

The liberation of Old Belief and the halting of seizure campaigns immediately had an unintended effect on *Edinoverie*. With the Edict of Toleration in 1905, the Old Believers rapidly established new printing presses or unveiled previously hidden ones. The typography felt squeezed. In the Moscow *Edinoverie* diocesan congress of 1910, the representatives of the typography declared that since 1905 they had seen a sharp decline in their sales.³⁰ This would pose a problem to funding the new *Edinoverie* school proposed by the congress.³¹ This was a major problem not just for the Moscow *edinovertsy* but also for *Edinoverie* as a whole. The typography's substantial profits had been used to fund churches and parishes across the Empire.

The typography had gained so much money because it had been able to sell replacements to Old Believers for the books lost in seizures. They had been unable to print them

²⁷ Chaplin and et al., *Otzyvy*, 1: 634.

²⁸ P. Waldron, "Religious Toleration in Late Imperial Russia," in O. Crisp and L. Edmonson, eds., *Civil Rights in Imperial Russia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 112–113.

²⁹ P. Waldron, "Religious Reform after 1905: Old Believers and the Orthodox Church," *Oxford Slavonic Papers* 20 (1987): 110–39.

³⁰ *Trudy Moskovskogo edinovercheskogo s'ezda* (Moscow, 1910), 28.

³¹ *Ibid.*

themselves because of the laws against owning printing presses, selling books or even possessing tomes that lacked the header of the *Edinoverie* typography. This had rendered the *edinovertsy* in Moscow and beyond financially dependent on the government's relationship with the schism. The more confiscation there was, the more profitable the typography would be and the more it could fund *Edinoverie* institutions. With the Edict of Religious Toleration, the government had now committed itself to fully integrating Old Belief into the legal structures of the Empire. Confiscation became a relic of the past and so the profitability of the typography began to collapse. *Edinoverie* during and after the reign of Nicholas I had been structured in such a way that it was reliant on an endless campaign of persecution. When coercion collapsed, *Edinoverie* suffered a crisis of *raison d'être*.

The Old Believers also tried to regain their lost property, thereby directly threatening *Edinoverie*. After 1905, they began to appeal repeatedly to the Synod, the government and even Nicholas II for their lost possessions. In Stolypin and his successors they found an audience willing to listen. In 1906, the Prime Minister, as an act of good faith to the Old Believers, formed a commission to empty examples of property that had been kept in the central archive of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.³² He also sent a circular to all local government offices requesting invoices of what Old Believer property they had in preparation for its return.³³ Although almost all of the governors reported that they had no such property in their possession (a mark of just how much of it had ultimately gone to the Church) and the collection in the central archive was trifling, it was nevertheless a gesture from Stolypin that he was willing to take the idea of Old Believer property return seriously. This also was clear in his reaction to Old Believer petitions that landed on his desk. For example, in the case of Dmitrii Kvashnin, Stolypin found that the Church had reversed its earlier decision to return property to the Old Believer peasant when the local bishop wrote that to do so would mean the beginning of state persecution of the Orthodox Church. He wrote a letter to the ober-procurator P. P. Izvol'skii demanding that the decision be again reversed. However, Izvol'skii noted he had no way of interfering with the Synod's final decision.³⁴

³² N. V. Pivovarova, "Kabinet raskol'nich'ikh veshei' ministerstva vnutrennikh del: ob odnom nesostoiavshemsia muzee staroobriadcheskoi bogousluzhebnoi kul'tury," *Izvestiia Ural'skogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta* 6, no. 85 (2010): 237.

³³ RGIA, f. 1284, op. 185, d. 88, l. 1.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, l. 290.

The Synod itself established new rules about the return of property on 23 October 1907 that stated that everything seized after 1883 (i.e. after the law allowing the Old Believers to have private religious ceremonies) was to be returned to the original owners. An 1898 Senate ruling had already explained that confiscations in that period were not lawful. So long as the diocesan administrations could actually find the property and the petitioner was either the original owner or a rightful possessor, the property should be returned. For confiscations that had taken place prior to 1883, the diocesan administrations were told to refer to the Synod for case-by-case ruling.³⁵ However, either through deliberate calculation or clumsy wording, the decree only mentioned items seized from Old Believer prayer houses. Goods seized from individual persons or immoveable property was not mentioned. Nor would the law apply to the property seized before 1883. These were caveats that were later to be exploited by many diocesan secretaries. While sometimes the Synod did rule for the return of property on the basis of these rules, they usually ensured that any requested property that was in use was not returned, especially if those using it were *edinovertsy*.³⁶

Even when the Church had long abandoned temples, a struggle might emerge over ownership. In Kherson diocese, the *Edinoverie* churches of three different villages had been closed due to lack of parishioners in 1890. The Old Believers had petitioned to have the former churches converted into prayer houses but had met constant refusal.³⁷ On 7 October 1907, the Belaia Krinitza bishop Kirill of Odessa visited one of these churches and blessed it by the old rituals. From this point on, the Old Believer liturgy was held in it. The consecration of the former *Edinoverie* church would, in the words of archbishop Dimitrii, ‘cause trouble in the *Edinoverie* parishes of the diocese and [...] could encourage the schismatics to seize [another] *Edinoverie* church.’³⁸ Thus Dimitrii asked for criminal proceedings to be taken against Kirill and the Old Believer leaders and also for the Synod take steps to have the temple fully returned to the Church.³⁹

An example of a case revolving around liturgical equipment is furnished by the problems of Dmitrii Lysiakov, an Old Believer from Viatka province who had had books and icons taken from him in 1897. The Ministry of Justice pointed out to the Synod that the items

³⁵ RGIA, f. 797, op. 97, d. 366, l. 3.

³⁶ See the cases of Trofim Goroshnikov and Ivan Dokuchaev, both of whom received only a small fraction of their property back because the rest was in use in *Edinoverie* churches. RGIA, f. 796, op. 188, d. 7606 and f. 796, op. 188, d. 7501.

³⁷ RGIA, f. 796, op. 190 VI ot. 3 st., d. 336, l. 2-2ob.

³⁸ Ibid., l. 3ob.

³⁹ Ibid., l. 6.

had been seized after 1883 and so the confiscation was illegitimate. The items should be returned forthwith.⁴⁰ The Synod at first agreed but in doing so provoked a worried report from bishop Filaret. He implored the Synod to take note that the matter was of crucial importance for his diocese as ‘the items seized from the Old Believers were transferred almost exclusively to *Edinoverie* churches and for some of these churches, these items are their only assets.’⁴¹ He elaborated that the paraphernalia was absolutely necessary for these temples. Without it, the numbers of liturgies would decline substantially. Removing the liturgical items would not be easy as the *ediovertsy* had now held them for almost a decade and thought of them as their own. Indeed, to do so ‘could even cause the spilling of blood and clashes between the *edinovertsy* and the Old Believers.’⁴² Filaret therefore told the Synod that he would not fulfil their order until they had reviewed his new evidence. On 6 October 1907, the Synod revoked its earlier decision, now ruling that the items were to remain in *Edinoverie* churches.⁴³

In a Chernigov parish, a heated and prolonged struggle over the ownership of land took place between the Church, the *edinovertsy* and the Old Believers. The land in question had once had a *Edinoverie* church on it. However this had burnt down and had not been replaced.⁴⁴ In 1909 the Old Believers petitioned the governor to build a church on the grounds and a year later this permission was given with the backing of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.⁴⁵ The chancellery of the ober-procurator relayed its displeasure, noting that not only did this constitute a violation of Church property but also that ‘it would create a great temptation among the local *edinovertsy* [since construction] would serve as a great victory for the Old Believers and a loss for the interests of the Orthodox mission.’⁴⁶ On 2 February 1914, the Old Believers, led by one of their bishops, broke the memorial placed on the site of the former *Edinoverie* church and then consecrated their own foundation stone with holy water.⁴⁷ The *Edinoverie* clergy went to the local Old Believer commune to protest this action whereupon the Old Believers shouted that they wanted to use the land to build a church and not a ‘tavern’ and that ‘soon the time will come when we will seize all of the churches in Starodub and the Klimovskii monastery.’

⁴⁰ RGIA, f. 796, op. 187, d. 7348, l. 2.

⁴¹ Ibid., l. 3ob.

⁴² Ibid., l. 5.

⁴³ Ibid., l. 6ob.

⁴⁴ RGIA, f. 796, op. 193, d. 1893, l. 2ob

⁴⁵ Ibid., l. 3-4.

⁴⁶ Ibid., l. 9ob.

⁴⁷ Ibid., l. 24ob.

They would take everything back that Nicholas I had given.⁴⁸ The consistory tried repeatedly to have the Belaia Krinitza bishop and the local Old Believer leaders prosecuted under the criminal code for this behavior but on each occasion were turned down by the courts on the basis that no law had been broken.

All three cases demonstrate the Church's commitment to defending *Edinoverie* property against the Old Believers and their occasional backers, the state. The source of their concern was both apostasy from *Edinoverie* and the decline of its viability among the schismatics. It demonstrates that the hierarchs and the Synod were aware that much of *Edinoverie*'s attractiveness derived from its previous protected position. Its exemption from persecution and its position as a recipient of confiscated property had been two key points in luring Old Believers into the Church. With the end of persecution and the legalization of Old Believer, *Edinoverie* looked as if it was no longer privileged and the *edinovertsy* would undoubtedly be made aware of this if the schismatics successfully reclaimed property. *Edinoverie* was an arm of a coercive system that had been dismantled and the Church had to find a way to deal with this. However, it had no new solutions. Its constant attempts to have the Old Believers prosecuted shows it was still trying to rely on police support to fight its battles.

The confrontation between the Church and the state on the matter of property did not occur until after Stolypin's assassination. In early 1912, a long running case in Riga diocese attained a degree of prominence because Vasilii Vasilkov, an Old Believer petitioner, sent a missive to M. K. Ermolaev, an Old Believer Duma member. The case involved property from Pavel Prusskii's former skete in Prussia. After the death of the last resident, all of the books and liturgical equipment were sold to a merchant in Riga. They were seized in transit in 1885 and then distributed among *Edinoverie* churches in Riga, a missionary school and a local church museum.⁴⁹

By bringing the matter to the attention of Ermolaev, Vasilkov ensured that the issue would be brought onto the stage of the State Duma. On 12 March 1912, Ermolaev made a speech in the Duma on this subject. The Church, in the person of Evlogii (Georgievskii), tried to make an amendment to the proposal that would exclude all property being used by the Orthodox Church. He explained that whilst he held nothing against giving back Old Believer property, he could not sanction the return of those items that had already

⁴⁸ Ibid., l. 24ob-25.

⁴⁹ RGIA, f. 797, op. 18, d. 15, l. 2ob

been blessed and used within Orthodoxy. Such would be 'an encroachment on the property of the Orthodox Church.'⁵⁰ However, the amendment was narrowly defeated, 100 against and 94 in support. Ermolaev's proposal was then passed.

The consequences of the Duma debate meant that many statesmen were suddenly aware of the Old Believers' growing dissatisfaction. On 30 April 1912, A. A. Makarov, the Minister of Internal Affairs, sent a letter to V. N. Kokovtsov, the chairman of the Council of Ministers, regarding Old Believer property. After reviewing the fact that most of the sought after items were in the hands of consistories, Makarov condemned the Church: 'the continuous refusal of similar Old Believer petitions by the Orthodox ecclesiastical authorities undoubtedly contradicts the spirit of the recent supreme edicts that relate to the Old Believers and cannot but reflect on the mood of Old Belief.'⁵¹ Makarov had heard from his Moscow officials some rather unsettling rumours from the 12th All Russian Old Believer Congress. Some of the more eminent members of this congress had

expressed doubt about the sincerity and firmness of the defence of their interests by the Octobrists and therefore resolved to support the Kadets in the approaching elections. Moreover, the leaders of the Old Believer movement themselves recognize that the mood of the masses of Old Believers voting in the elections depends on the resolution of this or that petition about the return of Old Believer property. At the present moment, their leaders state that a partial return of their property to the Old Believers would be sufficient and they would support the Government. The vast social importance of Old Belief as an individual social group is recognized not only by the Old Believers themselves but also by the left-wing parties who therefore now study the mood of the Old Believers: their political direction depends on it.⁵²

The fear was that the liberal Kadets were courting the Old Believers from their traditional alliance with the Octobrists. Therefore Makarov asked Kokovtsov to relay to the ober-procurator V. K. Sabler a request that the Synod not refuse any further petitions. Sabler replied to Kokovtsov on 8 May 1912. Sabler stated that he was of the same view as Makarov and therefore was going to endeavour to see that petitions were not

⁵⁰ *Gosudarstvennaia Duma. Sozyv (3). Sessiia (5). Stenograficheskie otchety.* (St. Petersburg, 1912), 909–910.

⁵¹ RGIA, f. 1276, op. 8, d. 597, l. 1-8.

⁵² *Ibid.*

refused.⁵³ To prove his point, Sabler stated that the Synod had revised its decision on the Vasil'kov case. The property would be returned to him.

On first view, the Church may seem to have come off worse from this bout with the state: Sabler had not offered a single word in defence of their policies and had managed to pressure the Synod into revising its earlier judgment. However, this was not entirely the case. On 18 October 1912, Sabler presented the records of the Duma debate to the Synod and asked them to consider the matter. When the Synod finally dealt with matter almost two years later on 12 August 1914, it simply reiterated that the regulation of 23 October 1907 was quite adequate and that property confiscated before 1883 would remain in the hands of the Church unless there were some especially good reason for its return.⁵⁴ Nor did Vasil'kov get his property back. The Riga consistory held onto the property whilst preparing another counter-petition, which was submitted only in 1914.

The importance of a Church victory in the property question should not be understated. It was not just a matter of preventing the loss of a few icons and books. In many dioceses, the vast majority of *Edinoverie* churches had been Old Believer chapels. This was particularly so in Chernigov, Perm' and Ekaterinburg. Many of the monasteries had formerly belonged to Old Belief, including the Nikol'skii monastery in Moscow. Had the state taken a firmer line and enforced property returns, then *Edinoverie* would simply have been extinguished in many provinces. Just as Old Believers had converted to *Edinoverie* in order to keep hold of their property, it is more than likely that the *edinovertsy* would have returned to the schism along with their churches. The leaders of *Edinoverie* were certainly aware of this. At the 4th All Russian Missionary Congress in 1908 the *edinovertsy* applied to the Church authorities for guarantees of their property.⁵⁵ At the second National *Edinoverie* Congress in 1917, the *edinovertsy* remained unwilling to sacrifice their property and preferred to protest their innocence in the original act of confiscation.⁵⁶

The issue of Old Believer property is also instructive because it reveals how reliant the *edinovertsy* had been on the state's persecution of the Old Believers. Not only were their institutions, primarily the typography, the beneficiaries of sequestration but so were their

⁵³ RGIA, f. 797, op. 18, d. 15, l. 30.

⁵⁴ RGIA, f. 796, op. 195, d. 1612, l. 4-5.

⁵⁵ "O zaniatiiakh IV-go Vserossiiskogo missionerskogo s''ezda v gor. Kieve," *Pribavleniia k tserkovnym vedomostiam*, no. 36 (1908): 1741.

⁵⁶ *Vtoroi Vserossiiskii s''ezd pravoslavnykh staroobriadtsev (edinoveritsev) v N. Novgorode 23-28 iulia 1917 goda.* (Petrograd, 1917), 70.

parishes: they had built up much wealth as a consequence of both Nicholas I's persecution and its continuation by local actors in the decades between 1855 and 1904.⁵⁷ *Edinoverie* was attractive in no small part because it did not share Old Belief's legal disadvantages and because it was the recipient of the plunder. *Edinoverie* was, in other words, both dependent and defined by its position within a wider system of religious intolerance. When that crumbled in 1905, *Edinoverie* faced an existential and financial crisis, worsened by the fact that elements of the state now looked on Old Belief as a viable political constituency.

Reforming Unity

When religious toleration was proclaimed in April 1905, there was no doubt among most leaders of the Church that some kind of reform was necessary to defend *Edinoverie* and maintain its missionary appeal. The clearest way forward was to continue the confessional integration project proposed in the early 1880s by weakening the rules of Platon, thus bringing down the confessional barriers he had erected over a century earlier. Few churchmen publicly defended these rules now, although some bishops, consistories, and priests in the provinces continued to enact their provisions. However, another choice was available in the proposals of Simeon Shleev. Choosing between these two courses whilst dealing with the complicated situation that toleration had created formed the basis for discussion on *Edinoverie* reform between 1905 and 1912.

The Impact of Toleration

Did the *edinovertsy* apostatise en masse when the Edict of Toleration gave them the right to do so? It is impossible to say whether the number of *edinovertsy* and *Edinoverie* parishes declined between 1905 and 1912 on a national level. On a diocesan level, the image is mixed. The *Edinoverie* population of Tobol'sk actually increased after 1905: between 1896 and 1915, seven new parishes were founded and the number of *edinovertsy* increased by over 5,000.⁵⁸ However, Perm' suffered a considerable decline, losing over 22,000 *edinovertsy* between 1894 and 1911.⁵⁹ Viatka lost 769 *edinovertsy* (8.6% of the

⁵⁷ That seizures went on after 1883 is undoubted. Catalogues of seized goods submitted by the consistories of various dioceses recorded confiscations as late as 1904. See RGIA, f. 1284, op. 185, d. 88.

⁵⁸ L. N. Suslova, "Edinoverie v Tobol'skoi gubernii vo vtoroi polovine XIX - nachale XX v.," *Problemy istorii Rossii*, no. 7 (2008): 216–217.

⁵⁹ I. Shestakov, ed., *Adres-kalendar' Permskoi eparkhii na 1894 god i spravochnaia kniga dlia dukhovenstva 1894* (Perm', 1894), 203–204; P. Ershov, ed., *Spravochnaia kniga Permskoi eparkhii na 1912 god* (Perm', 1911), 106–111; 212–213.

total) to apostasy in 1909 alone.⁶⁰ In Stavropol' diocese, numerical decline caused by apostasy had adverse effects on *Edinoverie* clergy as the payments they received from the flock decreased. In 1917, the *Edinoverie* priest Korotkov was demoted for marrying under aged couples and then forging the metrical books to conceal his actions. When he eventually confessed to his crime, he pled poverty. The defection of most of his flock to the schism in 1906 had reduced him to the most straightened circumstances.⁶¹ Thus he sought to increase payments by performing weddings that would normally be forbidden by Russian law. Always a variegated movement dependent on local conditions and personalities, *Edinoverie* did not act in a uniform way to the promulgation of toleration. However, some dioceses were haemorrhaging *edinovertsy* at an extreme rate.

The Synod believed that apostasy was a risk. Certainly this was the message emerging from petitions where *edinovertsy* and Orthodox alike made use of a rhetoric of toleration to get satisfaction. Some believers just delivered outright threats. In 1907, petitioners against the removal of a *Edinoverie* priest in Viatka stated that if he was not returned to his post 'all of us, or at least most of us, will convert to Old Belief.'⁶² The Orthodox of Novets in Vladimir diocese were even more explicit in 1909 when they demanded the right to convert to *Edinoverie*: 'if you [the Synod], for some reason or another, refuse to satisfy our request [to join *Edinoverie*], then we will be compelled to turn to the Austrians, whose church is close to us in the village of Valchikh. There they use rituals similar to ours. Some will convert to the priestless who have also built prayer houses among us and opened a community.'⁶³

Most chose to be more tactful. They might, for instance, plead the presence of a new Old Believer church in the vicinity or note the presence of a notorious preacher. Under this kind of schismatic threat, the only way to prevent those Orthodox inclined to schism from apostatising outright would be to establish or strengthen *Edinoverie* in the locality. Iaroslavl petitioners seeking to join *Edinoverie* pointed out that an Old Believer monk of the *spasovtsy* concord had arrived in a local village and founded a women's skete that had already attracted several female converts. No less dangerous was that two Austrian priests were present in a village only seven versts away and had established a church. Only a *Edinoverie* parish would save the situation.⁶⁴ The vitality of the schism in the new era of

⁶⁰ *Viatskaia eparkhiia. Istoriko-geograficheskoe i statisticheskoe opisanie.* (Viatka, 1912), 78–80.

⁶¹ RGIA, f. 796, op. 204, 5 otd., 1 st., d.32, l. 11.

⁶² RGIA, f. 796, op. 188, d. 7811., l. 5.

⁶³ RGIA, f. 797, op. 79 II otd. 3 st., d. 22, l. 8.

⁶⁴ RGIA, f. 796, op. 187, d. 7174, l. 2.

religious toleration was thus played upon to maximise the perception of threat from the side of the Old Believers.

Many would also play on the fact that religious toleration had granted others freedoms that *Edinoverie* lacked. The *edinovertsy* of Maikop were particularly plaintive when they reflected on their inability to open a church in 1910:

This is especially sorrowful and offensive because, in accordance with the Imperial will, freedom of conscience and faith was given: all schismatics and sectarians use this with the full co-operation and protection from the side of the civil authorities, according to the law. Why are there no such rights and privileges for us, the *Edinoverie* flock of the Church of Christ? Why not satisfy our desires, despite some years of anguish and longing in our souls and hearts?⁶⁵

The Synod had to confront the problem that the rules of Platon were still technically in force and that bishops, consistories and priests continued to use them as an excuse for denying movement from Orthodoxy to *Edinoverie*. Such had been acceptable even after 1886 but it was no longer so after 1905, when toleration meant that the parishioners could defect if they so desired. Indeed, it was not just that the rules of Platon were shaping diocesan policy. Many of the Church's agents in the provinces demonstrated that their attitudes to the *edinovertsy* and their rite remained wedded to the confessional attitudes of the 1800 settlement. They thus treated *Edinoverie* with unseemly suspicion and outright contempt. They also still considered it necessary to achieve ritual assimilation by persuading the *edinovertsy* to abandon the old rites: they certainly did not recognise that the old and the new rituals were equal in value.

Take Ioakim (Levitskii's) opposition to the idea of establishing a *Edinoverie* bishop in Ural'sk in 1910. He argued that such a move

will establish some lines, dividing the *edinovertsy* from the Orthodox Church: it would emphasise that Orthodoxy and *Edinoverie* are not one and the same and [will make] the conversion of *edinovertsy* to Orthodoxy difficult. It is possible in the future there will not be rapprochement of *Edinoverie* with Orthodoxy but, on the contrary, apostasy because of ritual difference, permitting bitterness and disobedience to the Orthodox Church authorities from the *Edinoverie* bishop, which could lead to a new schism, one all the more dangerous because it will have a full hierarchy on the basis of ritual difference. The aim of *Edinoverie* is

⁶⁵ RGIA, f. 796, op. 190, VI ot. 3 st., d. 49, l. 32.

the attraction of renegades (the so called Old Believers) into the bosom of the holy Orthodox Church[...]and not vice versa. The subordination of the majority of the Orthodox population to the domain of a *Edinoverie* hierarchy would contradict this aim. Although the Holy Church allows in *Edinoverie* ritual differences since [they are] unessential in the affair of salvation and so as not to beat the consciences of the weak but [it does so] without the diminishment of the truth and value of the Orthodoxy's ritual order.⁶⁶

This was not a wholehearted espousal of the values of the Platonic rules. Ioakim clearly believed that *Edinoverie* was one and the same as Orthodoxy and that a *Edinoverie* bishop would serve as grounds to an undesirable extension of the institutionalisation of ritual, both key tenets of the 1886 plan for confessional integration. Nevertheless, Platon's influence is clear. There was the belief that the *edinovertsy* should eventually 'convert' (*perekhod*) to Orthodoxy and that the Nikonian rituals were worthy of special protection. There is perhaps the implication that the rites of the *edinovertsy* were somewhat less true and valuable than those of the Church. The idea that Orthodox might be allowed to go to *Edinoverie* would amount to a step from full Orthodoxy to a lesser variant of it.

Ioakim was not alone. The Arkangel'sk missionary I. Legatov argued that 'conversion to *Edinoverie* from Orthodoxy does not entirely deprive people of salvation and it does not place them outside the Holy Church, even though it is a descent from the perfect to the less perfect.'⁶⁷ He also stated that it is 'impossible to repudiate that *Edinoverie* is actually a step for conversion to Orthodoxy from the schism.'⁶⁸ Others were not so ambiguous. The missionary Petr Trapitsyn was reported as having insulted the two fingered sign of the cross by calling it 'an Arian heresy.'⁶⁹ The Orthodox priest Vasilii Sapyrkin in a parish on the Don argued that 'never had *Edinoverie* and Orthodoxy presented one organic body.' The diocesan missionary fully agreed with him. When he reported to bishop Ioann in 1917, he said that '*Edinoverie* is a temporary matter' and that the *edinovertsy* use of the old ritual meant they lived in 'weakness.'⁷⁰

Consequently it was apparent that the rules of Platon were perpetuating religious difference between the Orthodox and the *edinovertsy*. The question that the Synod and other high level organs of Church authority had to face was what to do with the 1800

⁶⁶ RGIA, f. 796, op. 190, VI otd. 3 st., d. 15, l. 168-169.

⁶⁷ I. Legatov, *O sovremennykh nuzhdakh edinoveriia i o merakh dlia sblizheniia staroobriadtsiev s pravoslavn'iu tserkov'iu* (Arkhangel'sk, 1905), 44.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 8.

⁶⁹ RGIA, f. 796, op. 193, d. 1853, l. 25ob.

⁷⁰ RGIA, f. 796, op. 204 6 ot, 3 st., d. 12, l. 1ob.

settlement now that the toleration edict of 1905 had made it legitimate for Orthodox to move from one Christian confession to another. To do nothing would lead to the claim that ‘*Edinoverie* is placed lower than all other confessions.’⁷¹

An Alternative Path

For some, the abolition of the rules of Platon would not be enough. Simeon Shleev was one such individual. Born in 1878, he was originally from a priestless Old Believer family in Simbirsk province. Shleev’s father and uncle had both converted to *Edinoverie* and were ordained as priests when he was only three years old. Therefore, he was not only raised in *Edinoverie* but also had access to the Church’s educational institutions. First studying at the Nizhnii Novgorod seminary and then entering the Kazan’ Ecclesiastical Academy in 1895, Shleev became one of the most educated *edinovertsy* in the Russian Empire. He was certainly a gifted scholar, as his history of *Edinoverie* demonstrates.

Although he graduated near the top of his class and was ordained as a priest in the oldest church in Kazan’, Shleev found that the new bishop, Dimitrii (Koval’nitskii), was not well disposed towards him: ‘he treated the *edinovertsy* like schismatics, or at least quasi-schismatics, and ignoramuses.’⁷² When Shleev tried to explain to Dimitrii that the *edinovertsy* were not compelled to attend joint ceremonies with the Orthodox, Dimitrii accused him of being a schismatic and threatened bringing the Synod down on the young priest’s head.⁷³ Fortunately for Shleev, his former mentor at the Academy Antonii (Khrapovitskii) came to the rescue, suggesting his candidacy to a vacant spot in the Nikol’skaia church in St Petersburg. He was duly elected in on 7 February 1905. At the tender age of 32, Shleev had been catapulted from the provinces to the richest *Edinoverie* parish in Russia. Consequently he was in the right place at the right time to exploit the Edict of Religious Toleration.

Shleev’s reform project will be discussed in detail in the following chapter so I will summarise here. Shleev believed it was necessary to go beyond the removal of the most objectionable rules of Platon. He argued that the internal life of *Edinoverie* had to be rejuvenated and its distinct ritual order protected. Only then could it attract the Old

⁷¹ Red., “Otvety na zaprosy,” *Pravda pravoslaviia* no. 2 (1906): 13.

⁷² N. P. Zimina, *Put’ na Golgoфу* (Moscow, 2005), 1: 65 Zimina’s account is based, almost word for word, on biographical notes almost certainly penned by Shleev himself. See; “Letopis’ edinovercheskoi zhizni,” *Pravda pravoslaviia* nos. 10, 11 (1906): 11–13, 14–16.

⁷³ Zimina, *Put’*, 67.

Believers. To do this, he envisioned the creation of a single *Edinoverie* prelate directly subordinate to the Synod who would manage all the *Edinoverie* parishes of the Empire. This central reform was accompanied by a package of administrative measures aimed at extending the authority of the bishop over the *edinovertsy*. For most Orthodox churchmen, the most discomfiting implication of the programme was that by placing the *edinovertsy* under the aegis of a single bishop, the diocesan prelates would no longer have any authority over *Edinoverie* in their dioceses. *Edinoverie* would be administratively cut off from the rest of the Church and the only point of contact would be in the Synod.

Shleev was not without supporters within the Church and understanding his links with other churchmen is vital to comprehending the course that the reform project took. Antonii (Khrapovitskii), archbishop of Volynia, was undoubtedly the most important figure. Antonii was that most rare of beasts, a prelate who came from the nobility rather than the clerical estate.⁷⁴ In the early stages of his monastic career, he had been rector of three of the four Ecclesiastical Academies, allowing him to develop an extensive network of protégés.⁷⁵ A zealot for monasticism and social outreach, Antonii pushed his students to take part in the burgeoning mission to the working classes. He was also sympathetic towards Old Belief, seeing in it an image of pre-Petrine Orthodoxy. He believed the anti-schismatic mission to be largely valueless since it only alienated the schism.⁷⁶

Antonii's tenure in Kazan' between 1897 and 1900 is most important for the present theme. It was here that Antonii met Shleev and included him in a circle of talented young students that included Mikhail (Semenov) and P. A. Chel'tsov.⁷⁷ It was most likely here that Shleev became acquainted with Andrei (Ukhtomskii), another noble monk who held Old Belief in high regard, since he had been appointed to supervise the Kazan' Academy's missionary courses in 1899.⁷⁸ Andrei's brother, the noted physiologist

⁷⁴ Between 1900 and 1910, only 6.4% of the bishops were from the nobility. This marked an increase from the previous decade where Antonii had been the sole representative of the nobility in the episcopate. J. Plamper, "The Russian Orthodox Episcopate, 1721-1917: A Prosopography," *Journal of Social History* 60 (2001): 23.

⁷⁵ I. Paert, *Spiritual Elders: Charisma and Tradition in Russian Orthodoxy* (Northern Illinois University Press, 2010), 157.

⁷⁶ For Antonii's view on the schism, see Cunningham, *A Vanquished Hope*, 64; 300–302 and J. Strickland, *The Making of Holy Russia: The Orthodox Church and Russian Nationalism Before the Revolution* (New York: Holy Trinity Publications, 2013), 127–132.

⁷⁷ Dixon, "Archimandrite Mikhail (Semenov)," 694–695.

⁷⁸ M. Zelenogorskii, *Zhizn' i trudy arkhiepiskopa Andreia (kniazia Ukhtomskogo)*, 2nd ed. (Moscow, 2011), 29.

Aleksei, joined *Edinoverie* in the same year. He became an elder at the Nikol'skaia church in 1912.⁷⁹

When the furore of 1905 broke out, Shleev joined his friends in supporting radical reform. He was one of the signatories of the letter of the thirty-two Petersburg priests and a member in the Union for Church Renewal.⁸⁰ This places Shleev on the left of Church politics, where he largely remained. Dixon briefly comments that by 1912 Shleev, along with Antonii, was 'irrevocably committed to reaction.'⁸¹ As I will show in the following chapters, this does not seem to be the case. Throughout his life, Shleev remained committed to certain tenets of liberal ecclesiastical thinking, such as democratising the parish, making concessions to the Old Believers in the name of reunification and opposition to the bureaucracy of the Synodal order. Indeed, his proposals for *Edinoverie* were intended to allow it to maintain its ancient piety so that its spirit could be used to rejuvenate Orthodoxy itself and thus save it from the deathly influence of the westernising Petrine reforms. Equally, Shleev maintained his alliance with Andrei (Ukhtomskii), a radical, until at least 1918. Certainly Shleev's journal ceased to publish articles from members of the Union for Church Renewal at the beginning of 1907. However, it probably did so because of Synodal pressure.

In Petersburg, Shleev began to expand his network of *Edinoverie* contacts. He rapidly developed a base for himself in the northern capital, made up of some of his fellow priests, the lay elders of the *Edinoverie* churches and notable parishioners. These included the elders M. M. Dikov, G. Dribintsev, Aleksei Ukhtomskii, Father P. Aksenov, and Father S. Verkhovskii (the nephew of Ioann).⁸² With their assistance, he fought and ultimately won a prolonged and bitter struggle to wrest the position of head priest of the Nikol'skii parish from its incumbent in 1907.⁸³ The huge scale of his efforts to gain

⁷⁹ Aleksei's relationship with Shleev appears to have been complex. He collected signatures for Shleev's petitions in 1905, voted in favour of the priest's proposals at the first National *Edinoverie* Congress in 1912 and was suggested as a candidate for the *Edinoverie* episcopate in 1917. However, after his election as elder, he wrote in a letter that 'it is necessary for me to firmly establish a strong and independent position, not only towards those parties which are prepared to spoil things for me, like the supporters of Father Simeon Shleev, but also towards Father Simeon himself because much in his kind of activity sickens me.' This was most likely in response to Shleev's proposed *Edinoverie* parish reform, which would strengthen the position of the clergy in their communities. A. Ukhtomskii, *Intuitsiia sovesti* [St. Petersburg, 1996], 46.

⁸⁰ Dixon, "Archimandrite Mikhail (Semenov)," 695.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Aksenov was also a member of the Union for Church Regeneration and a pamphlet from 1906 suggests that Dikov was more than sympathetic to its cause. Hedda, *His Kingdom Come*, 204 and M. M. Dikov, *Golos pravoslavnykh staroobriadtsev-edinovertsev* (St. Petersburg, 1906).

⁸³ V. Solov'ev, "Skorbnyi put'," *Pravda pravoslaviia*, no. 5–6 (February 27, 1907): 1–17.

national backing for his reform plan also put him in touch with provincial *edinovertsy*, most notably the priests Ioann Riabukhin in Kursk and I. Riabov in Viatka. Finally, there was his family: his father, uncle and cousins were all later to act as his emissaries and supporters at key moments.

All of the contacts were useful for pushing forward Shleev's reform proposals between 1905 and 1912. Antonii (Khrapovitskii's) support was vital for gaining Shleev a hearing both at the Pre-Conciliar Commission in 1906 and in the 4th All-Russian Missionary Congress in 1908.⁸⁴ For his pains, the *Edinoverie* petitions of 1905 and 1906 frequently asked that he be made into the Synodal *Edinoverie* bishop.⁸⁵ Riabukhin and Riabov organised local *Edinoverie* congresses in their dioceses in 1906 and 1908 that explicitly existed to discuss and provide backing for Shleev's plans.⁸⁶ His influence on the Viatka congress was made public when Shleev published his remarks on its programme.⁸⁷ A delegation of Shleev's parishioners also attended the 1910 Moscow *Edinoverie* congress to ensure his opinions were put across.⁸⁸

All of these venues were important for the future of Shleev's plan: they provided invaluable support for his ideas and enhanced his position as the leader of Russia's *edinovertsy*. The climatic moment came in January 1912 when the First All-Russian *Edinoverie* Congress was held in the northern capital. The *edinovertsy* had been campaigning for such a national congress since 1905 but had been met either by indifference or suspicion by the Synod and the various ober-procurators. Only when Antonii was made a member of the Synod in late 1911 was it pushed into realisation.⁸⁹

⁸⁴ For their collaboration in the Pre-Conciliar Commission, see S. Dixon, "Archimandrite Mikhail (Semenov)", 695. For Antonii's support at the Kiev missionary congress, see "Dnevnik edinoversta, byvshogo na missionerskom s'ezde," *Pravda pravoslaviia*, no. 24–25, 26–27, 30–31, 34–35 (1908): 14, 13, 11, 19.

⁸⁵ RGIA, f. 796, op. 190, VI otd., 3 st., d. 15, l. 25. Petition of Petersburg *edinovertsy*, 16 January 1906. Andrei (Ukhtomskii) was also frequently cited as a candidate. See *ibid.*, l. 79, petition of 15 June 1906.

⁸⁶ "Kurskii s'ezd predstavitelei ot pravoslavno-starobriadcheskogo (edinovercheskogo) klira i mirian," *Pravda pravoslaviia*, nos. 5–6, 9 (1907): 26–30, 5–15 and "Viatskii edinovercheskii s'ezd (10–17 iunia 1908 g.) i ego postanovleniia," *Viatskie eparkhial'nye vedomosti*, nos. 41, 42, 43, 44, 45 (1908): 1070–84, 1089–97, 1117–25, 1155–62, 1182–91.

⁸⁷ S. Shleev, *Zamechaniia na voprosy, podlezhashchie, soglasno programme, obsuzhdeniiu predstoiashchogo edinovercheskogo s'ezda v g. Viatke 3 iunia 1908 goda* (St. Petersburg, 1908).

⁸⁸ It should be noted that of the four *Edinoverie* congresses held between 1905 and 1912, the one in Moscow was the most limited in its scope. The Synod ordered Metropolitan Vladimir (Bogoiavlenskii) to ensure that it only discussed local issues. Thus questions about bishops, the anathemas and other contentious topics were off the table. *Trudy moskovskogo edinovercheskogo s'ezda*, 6.

⁸⁹ The *edinovertsy* had been petitioning about a national congress since 1905. On 29 April 1906, the Synod had ordered Antonii (Vadkovskii) to prepare for one. However, he procrastinated, unwilling to act because of the future Church Council. Repeated refusals were the result. See RGIA, f. 796, op. 190, VI otd., 3 st., d. 15, ll. 43, 89–90, 139.

Attended by 536 people from all over Russia (of whom 256 had the right to vote) and opened with unparalleled pomp, it marked the first time that *Edinoverie* had come together as a national movement. It was also the pinnacle of the reform scheme, the moment when all the disparate ideas that had been formulated over the previous seven years came together into a coherent whole. The result was heartening for Shleev. Despite hostility from the Orthodox missionaries and some of the prelates who were present, the delegates passed nearly every plank of his programme with enormous majorities.⁹⁰

The Synod's failure to act on the implementation of the congress' resolutions soured the moment. *Edinoverie*'s defining moment came to nothing as the Church plunged even deeper into reaction under the influence of Grigorii Rasputin. Shleev's two episcopal supporters, Antonii and Andrei, were both fierce opponents of the Siberian *starets* and suffered accordingly. Antonii was humiliated when an anticipated promotion to the metropolitane of Moscow was blocked by the influence of Rasputin whilst Andrei was unexpectedly transferred from one of the Kazan' suffragancies to be the bishop of Sukhumi after falling out with Rasputin in 1911.⁹¹ He wrote of his transfer: 'I only learned from the newspaper about my removal from Kazan' and no-one explained to me why I was torn from my spiritual family...and now I find myself in Abkhazia, I have been sent to a town whose name I don't even know.'⁹² Therefore it is not surprising that Shleev was almost completely silent after 1912. He only began to fight once again for his treasured reforms when the imperial state was washed away in February 1917.

Missionaries

The greatest opponents to Shleev's ideas came not from the highest bodies of Church authority but rather from the missionary movement. In the last third of the nineteenth century, Russia's missionaries had becoming increasingly organised, with the foundation of missionary brotherhoods in many of the Empire's cities, the establishment of the Russian Missionary Society in 1870, and the holding of national congresses in 1887, 1891, 1897 and 1908.⁹³ In 1908, the missionaries also managed to attain a permanent missionary board under the aegis of the Synod, receiving a level of institutionalisation

⁹⁰ *Pervyi Vserossiiskii s''ezd pravoslavnykh staroobriadtsev (edinovertsev)* (St. Petersburg, 1912), 272.

⁹¹ Cunningham, *A Vanquished Hope*, 324.

⁹² Quoted in Zelenogorskii, *Zhizn'*, footnote 48, 40–41.

⁹³ For the brotherhoods, see A. B. Efimov, *Ocherki po istorii missionerstva russkoi pravoslavnoi tserkvi* (Moscow, 2007), 424–439. For the Russian Orthodox Missionary Society, see A. N. Michaelson, "The Russian Orthodox Missionary Society, 1870-1917: A Study of Religious and Educational Enterprise" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1999).

that had previously been reserved for the schooling system and the chaplaincy of the army and court.⁹⁴ They had also managed to attain something of a leadership position on *Edinoverie*, thanks to the legacy of Pavel Prusskii and Nikolai Subbotin. It was highly symbolic that Pavel hosted the first two national missionary congresses in the Moscow Nikol'skii monastery. Few other churchmen could claim the same level of sustained interaction with the *edinovertsy* as the missionaries. Around the figure of Vasili Skvortsov, Russia's chief secular missionary after the death of Subbotin in 1905, gathered a party who were intensively interested in the affairs of *Edinoverie*: Dmitrii Aleksandrov, Ioann Polianskii, the *edinoverets* Ksenofont Kriuchkov, N. M. Griniakin, and Professor N. I. Ivanovskii.

Initially there were few signs of disagreement between Shleev and the leaders of the missionary movement. Indeed, on the anniversary of *Edinoverie*'s foundation in 1900, Skvortsov had directly proclaimed his support for the term 'Orthodox Old Belief,' a term that he was to later contest with much fiery rhetoric.⁹⁵ In the first couple of years following the Edict of Toleration, some of the missionaries took steps to meet Shleev halfway. In a local missionary congress in Nizhnii Novogord, Aleksandrov, Kriuchkov and Ivanovskii declared that while they were unwilling to accept a Synodal *Edinoverie* bishop, they would support a commission, which would enable Shleev to achieve the centralisation of *Edinoverie*.⁹⁶ The missionaries also consistently backed the idea of appointing a *Edinoverie* suffragan in Ural'sk.⁹⁷

However, the grounds for compromise vanished rapidly. Firstly, there was Shleev's association with Church radicals, whom the missionaries detested. Secondly, Shleev propounded his ideas for *Edinoverie* reform on the basis of the slogan 'not just a missionary encampment.' For Shleev, the internal reform of *Edinoverie* had to come before its utilisation as a missionary weapon against the schism. It could only be attractive once its ritual order and administrative structure had been purified and re-ordered: 'the mission itself stands useless if it is not reliant on church-parish life. The parish does not

⁹⁴ A. Kravetskii, *Tserkovnaia missiia v epokhu peremen (mezhdru propoved'iu i dialogom)*. (Moscow, 2012), 79.

⁹⁵ V. M. Skvortsov, ed., *Iubileinoe torzhestvo pravoslavnogo staroobriadchestva (edinoveriia). (27 oktiabria 1900)* (St Petersburg, 1901).

⁹⁶ V. Senatov, "O smysle edinovercheskogo episkopstva," *Missionerskoe obozrenie*, no. 17 (1905): 834.

⁹⁷ *Zhurnaly i protokoly zasedanii vysochaishche uchrezhdennago predsobornago prisutstviia*, vol. 7 (St. Petersburg, 1907), 282–284.

depend on the internal mission but rather the internal mission on the parish.⁹⁸ With the downgrading of the missionary role of *Edinoverie*, Skvortsov and his allies saw their influence over the *edinovertsy* being marginalised and so fought virulently to justify their role in *Edinoverie*. As Aleksandrov put it in 1912, ‘there are no questions of *Edinoverie* and there cannot be: there are questions of the success or failure of the Orthodox mission into which questions relating to the development and good order of *Edinoverie* can enter.’⁹⁹ The debate over the significance of the mission in *Edinoverie* was not just a clash of ideas. It was also a power struggle for leadership of the *edinovertsy*. In a later article, Aleksandrov declared that Shleev sought to reform *Edinoverie* in order to extend his personal control.¹⁰⁰ Finally, almost all of the high-ranking missionaries were ardent supporters of Subbotin’s conception of unity in faith. Confessional integration was to be achieved by minimising the differences between Orthodoxy and *Edinoverie*. Shleev’s idea was the exact opposite since he wanted to further institutionalise *Edinoverie* distinction. There was thus not much ground for compromise between Shleev’s camp and that of the missionaries. They were divided by political differences, by a contest for authority, and by radically different interpretations of *Edinoverie*’s place in the confessional continuum between Orthodoxy and Old Belief.

Shleev and his backers did nothing to try and overcome these differences. The pugnacious priest rarely moderated his language. His petitions between 1905 and 1912 were filled with hostile attacks on Russian Orthodox bishops, priests, and consistories for the way in which they had undermined the *edinovertsy* at every opportunity. Shleev repeatedly and loudly declared himself to be the direct successor of Ioann Verkhovskii, the avowed enemy of Subbotin and proponent of Old Believer freedom. He wrote in 1906:

The memory of his [Verkhovskii’s] heroic acts (*podvigakh*) lives on in the hearts of the *edinovertsy* to the present day. Therefore there is nothing surprising in the fact that the Petersburg *Edinoverie* community, led by its elders, was the first to respond to the voice of Father Simeon Shleev. He summoned them to the same [task] as their former leader and his long-suffering predecessor.¹⁰¹

To associate himself and his reform plans with the memory of such a detested figure was certainly a tactical mistake. One commentator in 1917 argued that Shleev was actually

⁹⁸ *Pervyi Vserossiiskii s’ezd*, 3.

⁹⁹ V. M. Skvortsov, ed., *Pervyi Vserossiiskii edinovercheskii s’ezd* (St. Petersburg, 1912), 61.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 60.

¹⁰¹ “Letopis’ Edinovercheskoi zhizni,” 12.

more dangerous for *Edinoverie* than Verkhovskii because of his wider influence.¹⁰² Shleev's journal, *Pravda pravoslaviia*, exacerbated matters through its militancy. In its first few months, it took an openly radical tone and was home to essays written by some of the members of the Union of Church Regeneration. Polemics between *Pravda pravoslaviia* and Skvortsov's journals, *Kolokol*, and *Missionerskoe obozrenie*, quickly became heated. Skvortsov attacked Shleev's co-editor Petr Aksenov by using the word *Aksenovshchina* to refer to those young priests following in the footsteps of Georgii Gapon. Aksenov responded by calling Skvortsov 'a sentinel of bureaucratic Orthodoxy.'¹⁰³

The 4th All Russian Missionary Congress in Kiev in July 1908 revealed how poor the relationship between the two groups had become. Shleev wanted to organise a sub-commission to discuss *Edinoverie* apart from the main congress but Skvortov's party of missionaries opposed him. When he produced a signed paper from Antonii (Khrapovitskii) that gave permission for such a commission to be formed, 'N. M. Griniakin demanded the composition of a protocol about Shleev as a disturber of order and peace and to ask the authorities to expel him from Kiev.'¹⁰⁴ On 14 July, the missionaries attempted to prevent the *edinovertsy* from using a free afternoon to discuss their issues. They forced their way into the meeting hall and demanded to be allowed to participate. This forced the *edinovertsy* to relocate.¹⁰⁵ Such public disagreements meant that it was difficult for the Church authorities to find a solution that could please such deeply opposed protagonists.

Official Inaction

As it had in between 1864 and 1886, the Church faced three essential problems that needed resolution: *Edinoverie* bishops, the anathemas of the seventeenth century, and the rules of Platon. I will limit myself here to the latter two subjects, since I will discuss the issue of *Edinoverie* bishops intensively in the next chapter.

The only matter on which any consensus existed was the approach to the rules. All of the parties concerned were at least committed to abolishing rules five and eleven, thereby bringing down the confessional barriers of the 1800 settlement. Shleev wanted to dispose of anything that suggested *Edinoverie* was inferior to Orthodoxy. The missionaries were

¹⁰² V. Belikov, "K voprosu ob edinoverii," *Trudy Kievskoi dukhovnoi akademii*, no. 1 (1917): 16.

¹⁰³ P. Aksenov, "Vynuzhdennye rechi," *Pravda pravoslaviia* no. 8 (1906): 1.

¹⁰⁴ "Dnevnik Edinovertsia," no. 34-35, 19.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, nos. 30-31, 12.

successors of Subbotin and his plan and since Subbotin himself had recommended the replacement of the rules back in 1880, there was hardly anything radical about backing a toned down version of the same idea. The Synod too sought the full realisation of confessional integration that had become Church policy in 1886. The Viatka and national *Edinoverie* congresses voted for the offending rule to be abolished: so did the 1908 missionary congress.¹⁰⁶ The Pre-Conciliar Commission in 1906 resolved to ask the Church Council for the same.¹⁰⁷ However, such a Council never came and therefore the confusing situation remained intact. The rules of Platon were in force but the provisions of the Edict of Toleration contradicted them. No-one could be sure which was supposed to supersede the other.¹⁰⁸

Another problem for the Synod was that the confessional integration project was beginning to have some influence in the parishes. *Edinovertsy* were increasingly defining *Edinoverie* by its terms. In Iaroslavl', some parishioners argued 'we do not consider the *Edinoverie* church as separate from the Greco-Russian Church: but we consider it united to the Orthodox Church, keeping the single Orthodox Catholic faith in the Holy Trinity. We even consider the Greco-Russian Church as a mother, having given birth to the *Edinoverie* church by [granting it] the apostolic leadership of the priesthood.'¹⁰⁹ Another parish in Maikop quoted the 1885 Kazan' episcopal council to protest at the contemptuous attitude with which the consistory treated them.¹¹⁰ In Saratov, applicants to join *Edinoverie* quoted at length an article by Professor Ivanovskii that extolled the term of confessional integration.¹¹¹ The Synod was under pressure from parishioners who wanted it to realise unity in action as well in words.

The makeshift solution that the Synod arrived at was to use its function as the highest body of appeal in Church matters to abolish the fifth rule in practice, if not in theory. When the Orthodox found their application to join *Edinoverie* stymied by consistories and bishops zealously applying the fifth rule, they appealed to the Synod. In most cases, the Synod overturned the decisions of the diocesan administrations and referenced the resolutions of the Pre-Conciliar Commission and the fourth missionary congress as the

¹⁰⁶ "Viatskii edinovercheskii s'ezd," 44, 1156; *Pervyi Vserossiiskii s'ezd*, 59–61; "O zaniatiakh," 36, 1741.

¹⁰⁷ *Zhurnaly i protokoly* (St. Petersburg, 1907), 2: 219–220.

¹⁰⁸ When it came to the question of intermarriage between *edinovertsy* and Old Believers, the Bishop of Samara was unsure whether to abide by the prescriptions of Platon or those of the 1905 edict. RGIA, f. 796, op. 190, VI otd., 3 st., d.20, ll. 4-5.

¹⁰⁹ RGIA, f. 796, op. 187, d. 7174, l. 3ob.

¹¹⁰ RGIA, f. 796, op. 204 6 ot, 3 st., d. 12, l. 1.ob-2.

¹¹¹ RGIA, f. 796, op. 195, d. 1441, l. 1ob.

reason for doing so. Diocesan support for the Platonic rules was thus squeezed from above as the Synod strove to integrate *Edinoverie* and Orthodoxy into a single confession. Indeed, the Synod also went so far as to block attempts by *edinovertsy* to join Orthodoxy, thus undermining the commitment of the rules to ritual assimilation. Some of the *edinovertsy* of Elionka asked the Synod

to accept our little community of believers into the bosom of the Holy Eastern Catholic Church, transferring our *Edinoverie* church to Orthodoxy, [an action] which is extremely necessary in the town: besides our true desire, it is a means of keeping in the faith local Christians apostatising from it in view of the absence of Orthodox influence and a means of the most possible drawing of the other Christian confessions [*inovertsy*] with Orthodoxy, because many of them are sympathetic.¹¹²

This met with little favour from any party in the Church (other *Edinoverie* parishioners said that it would mean ‘*Edinoverie* would die in Elionka.’)¹¹³ The Synod decreed ‘that *Edinoverie* and Orthodoxy compose one true Church of Christ and therefore the petitioners already dwell in the bosom of the Church of Christ without changing their church to Orthodoxy.’¹¹⁴ In this case, the Synod had little to be worried about. The petitioners had little to no support either from the bishop, the local missionaries or the community of the town.

However, they were also willing to obstruct full conversion to Orthodoxy in cases where bishops and priests had long supported it. In the early 1890s, the priest Simeon Zhemchuzhin was concerned that the presence of Orthodox in his church in the Petersburg province since it meant ‘the Orthodox were easily alienated from Orthodox rituals and became accustomed to *Edinoverie* ones.’¹¹⁵ Backed by Antonii (Vadkovskii) and the consistory, Zhemchuzhin launched on a campaign to introduce Nikonian rites into the church. Whilst initially successful, the instance provoked a clash between Orthodox and *edinovertsy*, the latter claiming that ‘we cannot even to make the sign of the cross without fear that they [the Orthodox] will laugh [at us] for the two fingers.’¹¹⁶ The situation escalated when the *edinovertsy* blockaded the church and thus forced the Synod

¹¹² RGIA, f. 796, op. 194, d. 1767, l. 1.

¹¹³ Ibid., l. 5.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., l. 9-9ob.

¹¹⁵ RGIA, f. 796, op. 190 VI otd. 3 st., d. 30, l. 4.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., l. 20.

to take definitive action. They undid Antonii's decade-long policy towards the parish and ordered that the church be returned exclusively to *Edinoverie*.

Nevertheless, the use of the Synod's appellate function was only a stopgap. Whilst the rules of Platon remained, they were a visible symbol of confessional division and offered diocesan authorities opportunity to legitimately contradict Synodal policy. The failure to call a Church Council consequently left the Synod hamstrung.

On the anathemas, the missionaries and Shleev's party violently disagreed. Shleev called for their complete repeal, since they 'do no small harm to the spread of *Edinoverie* among the Old Believers and they disturb the *edinovertsy* and equally many of the representatives of Orthodoxy.'¹¹⁷ The missionaries were resolutely opposed to such an action. The most that they were willing to concede was the removal of the 1656 anathemas imposed by Patriarch Macarios of Antioch and that once again the Synod explain the true meaning of the 1667 anathemas: that they had been placed on individuals who used the rituals to signify their revolt against Church authority rather than the rites in and of themselves.¹¹⁸ Macarios' anathemas could be sacrificed because they were nothing more than his personal opinions and were rendered superfluous by the resolutions of the 1667 council anyway.¹¹⁹ Such was the course of action chosen by the Pre-Conciliar Commission, the best compromise that could be hoped for in the circumstances.¹²⁰ As before, the possibility of a Church Council in the near future meant the Synod was reluctant to act since only a Council would have the authority to remove even the anathemas of 1656.

Reforming *Edinoverie* proved near impossible after 1905. Little consensus existed on the key questions and two of the interested parties, Shleev's *edinovertsy* and the Orthodox missionaries, were irreconcilably opposed. The Pre-Conciliar Commission tried to find a middle ground that would satisfy both Shleev and the missionaries. The motivation was ultimately to achieve the logical conclusion of the plan for confessional integration proposed in 1886. However, the Church's higher authorities found themselves unable to act decisively because of the mirage of an imminent Church Council. Whilst the promise existed, the Synod was afraid to implement any thorough reforms because the more

¹¹⁷ Simon (Shleev), *Edinoverie v svoem vnutrennem razvitii* (Moscow, 2004), 400.

¹¹⁸ Quite a few were reluctant to even make this concession, such as Nazarii (Kirillov), the bishop of Nizhnii Novgorod. Nazarii, "K voprosu o kliatvakh Antiokhiiskogo patriarkha Makarii i sobora 1656 g. na znameniiushchikhsia dvuperstno," *Missionerskoe obozrenie*, no. 1, 2 (1910): 33–42, 222–33.

¹¹⁹ "O zaniatiiakh," no. 36, 1740.

¹²⁰ *Zhurnaly i protokoly*, 244–245.

authoritative Council might undo whatever it did. Instead, the Synod had to rely on temporary measures, like using the appeals process to make confessional integration felt in the dioceses. However, such methods could not undo the experience of religious difference that had accumulated since 1800.

Reaching to the Schism

Actively reaching out to the schism was a core part of Shleev's plan. His suggestions for reform were not only intended to preserve *Edinoverie* but also to answer the main criticisms that had been levelled at it by the Old Believers over the previous century. Abolition of the anathemas, in Shleev's words, would be the Church's 'first step on the path to repentance.'¹²¹ One correspondent of Shleev's declared that *Edinoverie* bishops 'should unite all Old Believers, in particular the *beglopovtsy*.'¹²² In 1906, Aksenov called for the Synod to recognise the 'validity of the Austrian hierarchy on the basis of the canonical rules' and prepare conditions for reunification: 'so long as we, the Orthodox, do not soften our relations to the schismatics and do not change our usual views on the old rituals, the schism will not stop nursing hostility to the Orthodox Church.'¹²³

There were two fundamental problems with such a course of action. The first was that the rest of the Church remained entirely hostile to Old Belief and indeed feared it. Nikolai (Ziorov), the archbishop of Warsaw, showed this anxiety clearly when he spoke in 1910 to the State Council on the matter of further easing the position of the Old Believers. The reform would simultaneously lower the prestige of the Orthodox Church and increase that of Old Belief until they were approximately equivalent in standing. This would have catastrophic consequences. 'Now let me paint a picture, when all the enemies of the Church are unleashed and they desert our mother, the Holy Church: what will happen then?! Then will happen a great trouble in the Church – there will be enmity, division, malice, hatred. Many of the flock of the Holy Church will die from temptation. What kind of moral health will we have in such a spectacle?'¹²⁴ For Nikolai, the liberation of Old Belief could only mean the death of the Church. He spent the rest of speech detailing why the state could not be indifferent in the matter of fighting the schism and added that to

¹²¹ Shleev, *Edinoverie*, 321.

¹²² "Pis'ma k redaktsiiu," *Pravda pravoslaviia*, no. 38–39 (1907): 16.

¹²³ P. A., "Mnenie startsa protoiereia ob edinoverii i Avstriiskom sviashchenstve," *Glagol vremen*, no. 12 (1906): 8.

¹²⁴ Nikolai (Ziorov), *Rech' arkhiepiskopa Varshavogo Nikolaia v 48 zasedanii gos. soveta po staroobriadcheskomu voprosu* (St. Petersburg, 1910), 11.

recognise the name ‘Old Belief’ would ‘justify the schism and condemn us, the Orthodox, as new believers (*novoobriadtsy*).’¹²⁵ Even Antonii (Vadkovskii) had objected to the idea that official papers should refer to the schism by the less offensive name in the Committee of Ministers in January 1905.¹²⁶ The notion that the Church could recognise the Belaia Krinitsa hierarchy as legitimate and enter into negotiations with it on equal terms was out of the question. The only way forward was conquest, preferably with the aid of the state. That leading hierarchs adamantly refused to recognise the name of Old Belief also showed that they were nowhere near accepting that the rituals of the schism were older than those of the Church.

Then there was the matter of the Old Believers themselves. While I. Pozdeeva has pointed out that there was some residual persecution of the Old Believers, for the most part the schismatics were able to exploit their new liberties to the full.¹²⁷ In the era between 1905 and 1917, Old Believer culture and communal life flourished. Campaigns of church and chapel construction were undertaken by all the major concords.¹²⁸ Numerous newspapers and journals were founded to discuss all facets of Old Believer life.¹²⁹ Congresses proliferated at an astounding rate and they were not just limited to the leadership. In 1906, a congress of Old Believer peasants was held, as was a congress for ministers.¹³⁰ An Old Believer Theological and Pedagogical Institute was opened in Moscow in 1912.¹³¹ In short, the schism was blossoming and posed a marked contrast to the religious stagnation that so many noticed in Orthodox parishes. It was therefore naïve to suppose that Old Belief of any stripe had much interest in re-unification with Orthodoxy. If the schism had not chosen to do so in a position of weakness, why would it do so in one of strength?

Regardless of the daunting problems of reaching out more directly to the Old Believers, Shleev’s views were partially shared by his two main episcopal backers, Antonii (Khrapovitskii) and Andrei (Ukhtomskii). When it came to their views on the schism,

¹²⁵ Ibid., 2–3.

¹²⁶ *Zhurnaly komiteta ministrov*, 202.

¹²⁷ I. V. Pozdeeva, “The Silver Age of Russia’s Old Belief, 1905–17,” in G. B. Michels and R. L. Nichols, eds., *Russia’s Dissident Old Believers 1650–1950* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 74.

¹²⁸ For an analysis of post-1905 Old Believer architecture, see R. Robson, *Old Believers in Modern Russia* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1995), 53–74.

¹²⁹ R. Robson, “The Old Believer Press, 1905–1917,” in G. B. Michels and R. L. Nichols, eds., *Russia’s Dissident Old Believers 1650–1950* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 277–90.

¹³⁰ O. P. Ershova, *Staroobriadchestvo i vlast’* (Moscow, 1999), 103–104.

¹³¹ Pozdeeva, “The Silver Age,” 85.

both were rather positive, marking them out as exceptions in the early twentieth century Russian episcopate. They had imbibed trends in secular literature from the end of the nineteenth century when ‘some publicists started to make a direct connection between the Old Belief and Russianness.’¹³² The schism was uncorrupted by the westernising influences that had crept into Russia from the end of the seventeenth century and was untainted by the Synodal system of Church governance. Andrei asked the question: ‘why in actual fact are our schismatics incomparably steadier and stronger in cultural relations? Precisely because they live in a self-defined parish community while our villages eke out an existence only by order of the administration.’¹³³ Thus Antonii and Andrei both attempted to reach out to the Old Believers, the former in 1906 and 1912 and the latter in 1917.

On 29 April 1906, Antonii wrote a letter to the Belaia Krinitza hierarch Ioann (Kartushin) in his capacity as the chairman of the sixth section of the Pre-Conciliar Commission. He invited them to attend the sessions he chaired to discuss reunification: ‘I extend my hand to your love and I ask you and your brethren: set aside sinful harshness to one another and, praying to God, enter into a conversation about Church matters.’¹³⁴ He declared that this invitation was comparable to that the Church Fathers had issued to the Donatists.¹³⁵ Antonii suggested that the Belaia Krinitza’s priests and bishops could be confirmed in their present ranks without the need for the sacrament of ordination to be repeated. However, Ioann would have to show ‘equal love’ to the Church. Otherwise there would be no trust from either the Russian hierarchs or the Ecumenical Church.¹³⁶

Ioann would have none of it. The comparison with the Donatists was flawed because the Old Believers had never left the Church: ‘therefore [Old Belief] has no need to make concessions for unity to a church that has fallen away from old pre-Nikonian Orthodoxy.’¹³⁷ Thus, the restoration of unity could only occur via ‘your full return to pre-Nikonian Orthodoxy, with the abolition of all novelties and the renunciation of those

¹³² E. Krevsky, “Defining the Schism: Images and Interpretations of the Old Belief in Late Nineteenth-Century Russian Discourse” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Alberta, 2002), 223.

¹³³ Quoted in Zelenogorskii, *Zhizn’*, 34.

¹³⁴ Antonii (Khrapovitskii), *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 1 (St. Petersburg, 1911), 510.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 1:512.

insults and anathemas' placed against Old Belief.¹³⁸ Antonii's invitation would only be accepted when he declared that he understood these terms of reunification.

Clearly there was little chance of progress. The Old Believers considered themselves to be the one true Orthodox Church and therefore would not accept a compromise from a fallen faith. Antonii once more tried to open up relations between the Old Believers and the Orthodox in 1912. He made use of the National Congress to dispatch a circular letter to the Old Believers.¹³⁹ However, the results were much the same as before. Both sides viewed themselves as the true manifestation of Orthodoxy and so both were unwilling to concede anything to a mere pretender to the title.

A more prolonged attempted at negotiation took place in 1917 when Shleev and Andrei (Ukhtomskii) met with members of the Belaia Krinitsa hierarchy.¹⁴⁰ In their opinion, the Church would have to become conscious of the 'historical mistakes' that had led to the schism. However, Shleev made it transparent that this reunification had to occur under the aegis of the Orthodox Church, whatever its past errors:

In the aim of drawing the sympathy of the Old Believers of all concords to this great affair and avoiding the repetition of the historical mistakes of the past [...] the unifying of the *edinovertsy* with the rest of the Old Believers is possible to realise only together with the Orthodox bishops, who love the holy Russian church traditions and who can unite with the Old Believers bishops with the permission and blessing of the high church authorities of the Russian Orthodox Church.¹⁴¹

The major discussions occurred on 31 May 1917 when Shleev, Andrei and bishop Iosif (Petrovykh) of Uglich went to the Rogozhskoe monastery in Moscow to personally present a letter to thirteen Belaia Krinitsa hierarchs, headed by archbishop Meletii of Moscow. This kind of meeting was unprecedented not only in terms of the size and eminence of the Old Believer delegation but also in fact that Orthodox bishops, with the permission and approval of the Synod, had gone to the headquarters of priestly Old Belief in Russia to discuss the matter of reconciliation. Iosif spoke first, making a powerful statement in favour of unity in the face of German invasion. Then the points of the letter,

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Antonii (Khrapovitskii), *Okruzhnoe poslanie ko vsem otdel'aiushchimsia ot pravoslavnoi tserkvi staroobriadtsam* (St. Petersburg, 1913).

¹⁴⁰ Negotiations were not only carried on with the Belaia Krinitsa hierarchy. Grigorii Shleev also reported that he met a delegation of 18 *beglopopovtsy* on 18 July in Moscow. *Vtoroi Vserossiiskii s'ezd*, 16.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 11.

seven in total, were read out to the Old Believers. The Church Council of 1667 was first in the firing line. Its actions were blamed almost exclusively on the Greek hierarchs who had been present.¹⁴² Nikon too had to shoulder some of the culpability. Thanks to his low level of education and total ignorance of Greek, Nikon had misunderstood his duties towards rituals.

However, Iosif did not think that the Orthodox should surrender the Nikonian rituals. To do so would be to repeat Nikon's mistake.¹⁴³ This was expressed in terms that would surely be pleasing to the Old Believers. The recent origins of the Nikonian rituals were pointed out and their association with the Greek Church was made clear. Thus the Orthodox delegation hoped that 'that the Old Believers will show more tolerance, love, and understanding than did Patriarch Nikon when they recognise the new corrected order as not having heresy in it.'¹⁴⁴

It was a remarkable document. The delegation had conceded much to the Old Believers. They had made it clear that it was mostly the Orthodox Church that was at fault for the schism, although they mitigated this slightly by blaming the Council of 1667 and the anathemas on the Greek patriarchs. Nikon had been censured and his rituals were called both modern and Greek in origin. However, there were limits. The Russian Orthodox Church would not be surrendering its rituals.

The Belaia Krinitsa hierarchy politely but firmly rejected the letter. They announced that they absolutely could not consider the official Russian Church as Orthodox and so 'your suggestion of church peace between us and you together with the official church at the present time is unrealisable and even harmful for the purity of the old piety.'¹⁴⁵ *Edinoverie* was scarcely a *via media* between the two because innovations and its association with the Nikonian Church had corrupted the old liturgy.¹⁴⁶ Reconciliation could only happen when even external matters did not distinguish Russian Orthodox Christians. Consequently the Church had to abandon the new rituals. Not only would the anathemas have to be revoked but also the Church would have to ask forgiveness for the anathemas and the two centuries of persecution that had followed.

¹⁴² Ibid., 12.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 131.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 131–132.

The attempts in 1906, 1912 and 1917 to begin reconciliation with the Old Believers went nowhere. This says something quite significant about *Edinoverie*'s reputed missionary utility. Since the 1860s, reforms to *Edinoverie* had been partially motivated by a need to provide an answer to the critiques of Old Believer propagandists. Shleev repeatedly argued that bishops, the removal of the anathemas and the rest of his reform scheme would make it easier for *Edinoverie* to function as a bridge to unite the Orthodox Church and at least some portions of Old Belief. In 1917, just before the Local Church Council, he was on the cusp of being able to offer all of the required reforms to the Belaia Krinitza hierarchy. Yet they still rejected him. Shleev had fundamentally miscalculated. The Old Believers were ultimately not interested in either bishops or the repeal of the anathemas. Their opposition to *Edinoverie*, and consequently the Church, was based on something much deeper. They denied Russian Orthodoxy's legitimacy because in the process of changing ritual in the seventeenth century, it had changed dogma. The Church had fallen into heresy. The only way to redeem that fall was to utterly renounce the Nikonian rites, something the Church could not contemplate. This was *Edinoverie*'s fundamental problem. It might be able to convince those who became genuinely disillusioned with tenets of Old Believer theology but most would never be able to accept union with a Church that was heretical.

Conclusion

Between 1905 and 1917, the Russian Orthodox Church confronted the consequences of confessionalisation. It stood at a juncture in its history. One path led away from the confessional past and entailed the abandonment of the shield of the secular state in return for greater freedom to reform internally. The other was to maintain the status quo by continuing to rely on police power to keep other religions in check and secure its own flock. The Church got neither. It lost the coercive power of the government but did not gain freedom of action. The links with the state remained intensive and the innovative ways in which the Church had begun to reach out to Russian society at the end of the nineteenth century were either abandoned or stagnated. The course that most of its leaders sought was to fight purely defensive actions in the Duma and to rely on associations with the nationalist right, all the while pleading for the restoration of government support: 'they were reduced to an unedifying struggle to limit the scope of the toleration edict and to thwart its local impact.'¹⁴⁷ Not all of this was the fault of the Synod or the hierarchs. Nicholas II and his government created the situation when they refused to call a Church

¹⁴⁷ Dixon, "The Russian Orthodox Church," 346.

Council. This both denied the Church the possibility to make the required transformations and, worse still, thrust the Synod into indecision and inactivity. With the prospect of a Council being perpetually dangled in front of their eyes, they felt unable to undertake any wide project of regeneration themselves, even if they had been so inclined.

Edinoverie was caught in a parallel situation. Since 1825, it had been structured around policies of coercion. Its numbers had been won through repression, the accoutrements of its religious life taken through seizure and its economy buoyed by the repression of schismatic literature. After the Edict of Toleration raised the status of Old Belief to an unprecedented level, *Edinoverie* had to confront the same question as the rest of the Church: how was it to maintain its flock and how was it to compete with its religious rivals?

The contest that emerged between the mission and the *edinovertsy* did not help to resolve the question. The congresses, both *Edinoverie* and missionaries, produced increasingly dogmatic credos and provided public spaces for rancorous quarrelling. The Pre-Conciliar Commission did what it could to find a middle ground that might satisfy both parties, suggesting the possibility of some sort of *Edinoverie* hierarch and the removal of at least one set of anathemas. However, its solutions were never brought into being, which let the division between the two groups fester in the most public of possible ways until it became an unbridgeable gulf. In the future, compromise was unlikely to satisfy either group.

The one point on which there was general agreement in the higher echelons of the Church was that the fifth rule of Platon could no longer be sustained. The confessional boundary it had erected between Orthodoxy and *Edinoverie* had to be removed in order to demonstrate unity in faith. However, the Synod faced two problems. The first was the lack of a Council. The second was that a significant proportion of prelates, not to mention consistories, missionaries and priests, retained their commitment to the rules and the confessional safeguards within them. For them, the old rites remained resolutely inferior and *Edinoverie* was nothing more than a staging post to a purer form of belief. The two problems combined to create a situation where some diocesan authorities continued to utilise the fifth rule of Platon to prevent Orthodox conversion, thus continuing to perpetuate the idea of confessional division. When such decisions were made, they provoked feelings of inferiority because the Edict of Religious Toleration had granted the Orthodox access to most other religious groups. The Synod tried to ameliorate the situation by using the appeals system to overturn such decisions. But such only applied to the small number of cases that made their way to the Synod and it did not undo the

symbolic impact of the rules. It also illustrated the limited impact of the 1886 policy of confessional integration. Even after a century of existence, the hierarchy of the Russian Church could not agree whether *Edinoverie* was firmly within the Orthodox confession.

The negotiations with the Old Believers, especially those conducted in 1917, reveals that all of the reform schemes proposed after 1905 had essentially misunderstood the objections of the schism to both Orthodoxy and *Edinoverie*. Certainly, the Old Believers pointed to the lack of bishops, the anathemas, and the rules of Platon for propaganda purposes since such critiques might convince some *edinovertsy* to return to the schism. However, even if all of these criticisms were met, it did not remove the fundamental fact that Old Belief did not consider the Nikonian Church or its rituals legitimate. Even the Belaia Krinitza hierarchy would not concede that the Church deserved the name 'Orthodox'. Perhaps this was the fundamental point that the proponents of *Edinoverie* from Platon onwards had missed all along. *Edinoverie* could not alter the fact that Old Believer theology was predicated on the refusal to recognise the canonicity of Russian Orthodoxy. Nor could they downgrade the significance of their rites in order to reach a compromise with the Orthodox.

VII: The Confessionalisation of *Edinoverie*, 1905-1912

Introduction

Confronted with the challenge posed by the April 1905 Edict of Religious Toleration, the Synod chose to continue attempting to integrate *Edinoverie* and Orthodoxy into a single seamless confession, despite resistance from many prelates and priests. However, a new and vigorous *Edinoverie* leader opposed such a plan and thus confronted the leaders of the Church with a new problem. Simeon Shleev laid out a different schema of reform. It conceptualised *Edinoverie* in an innovative way and provided a blue print not simply for modifications to the 1800 settlement but rather a root-and-branch campaign of transformation that would turn *Edinoverie* from a series of isolated parishes into a uniform movement with a centrally located administration in charge of pursuing liturgical standardisation. This new form of confessionalisation, which I dub ‘separatist confessionalisation,’ sought to distinguish *Edinoverie* from Orthodoxy whilst maintaining the canonical links between the two. It too emerged from the rules of Platon: it was another answer to the contradiction between confessional inclusion and exclusion, another solution to the question of where *Edinoverie* sat in relation to Orthodoxy and Old Belief.

I once again turn to the classical concept of confessionalisation to justify my use of the concept in this chapter. Central to the idea is that there is intent to transform believers into a confession, a group defined and distinguished from others by its liturgical, theological and administrative peculiarities. I should emphasise that Shleev himself did not conceive of *Edinoverie* as a separate confession: he stated as early as 1900 that ‘inside Russia there is one and the same eastern Orthodox confession and in the midst of the one and the same Church of Christ there are two equally Orthodox rituals (*obriadstva*).’¹ He therefore would not have considered his actions to be confessionalisation, even if he had possessed the concept. However, if we look at the content of his ideas, we see many similarities with confessionalisation in other contexts. For instance, a determination not only to protect the distinctive rituals of *Edinoverie* but also to use them as the justification for the formation of a wide series of institutions that would serve to unify the scattered and disconnected *Edinoverie* parishes under the control of a *Edinoverie* hierarch. Equally, Shleev opposed the idea that *Edinoverie* should be incorporated into the Orthodox

¹ S. Shleev, ed., *Edinoverie i ego stoletnee organizovannoe sushchestvovanie v Russkoi tserkvi* (St. Petersburg, 1901), 18.

confession in everything other than rituals and elements of parish management, thus standing against confessional integration. At the heart of his schema was a series of dichotomies that served to distinguish *Edinoverie* from Orthodoxy. The former was national, religious, authentic, vital, communal and pious; the latter was westernised, secularised, novelty-ridden, bureaucratic, atomistic and religiously indifferent.

The example of the Uniate Church is instructive in this regard. The Uniate Church confessionalised through two interlinked processes. The first emphasised doctrinal unity with Rome in order to distinguish the Uniates from Orthodoxy and the second focussed on Uniate ritual and liturgical language so as to distinguish them from mainstream Catholicism. Barbara Skinner has taken this latter tendency to suggest that the Uniate Church was a separate confession, defining a confession as ‘a Christian creed that is actively pursuing a separate, delineated identity.’² Shleev did very much the same thing for *Edinoverie*. Canonical concord with the Orthodox Church served to differentiate the *edinovertsy* from the schismatics but, at the same time, he focussed on rituals to set them apart from the Orthodox. These two tenets of *Edinoverie*’s confessional identity were expressed in the new name that the reformers wanted: Orthodox Old Belief (*pravoslavnoe staroobriadchestvo*).³ It must also be noted that Shleev never countenanced the complete and utter division of *Edinoverie* and Orthodoxy. What he wanted was for *Edinoverie* to be ‘an autonomous repository of authentic Orthodoxy capable of exposing the inadequacies of the prevailing Synodal regime’ rather than rejoin the schism or form an autocephalous *Edinoverie* church.⁴

A key word in the vocabulary of Shleev and his supporters was ‘strictness’ (*strogost*). This term did not simply mean ensuring that the liturgy was performed fully and correctly but also that the behaviour of the worshippers themselves both inside and outside of the church was pious and proper. The maintenance of the old rituals and their embodiment in the divine service had a direction connection with the morality and religiosity of parish communities. Shleev’s plan of centralisation therefore had a social disciplining component. The establishment of a uniform *Edinoverie* liturgy would enable the new administrative apparatus in Petersburg to exercise control over both the external

² B. Skinner, *The Eastern Church Between Poland and Russia: Identity and Conflict in the Era of Partition* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2009), 14.

³ For a justification of this name, see V. M. Skvortsov, ed., *Iubileinoe torzhestvo pravoslavnogo staroobriadchestva (edinoveriia). (27 oktiabria 1900)* (St Petersburg, 1901), 14–15.

⁴ S. Dixon, “Archimandrite Mikhail (Semenov) and Russian Christian Socialism,” *Historical Journal* 51, no. 3 (2008): 694.

behaviour and the internal convictions of the flock, transforming them into a truly Christian community. This reflects the experience of sixteenth century Europe whereby new confessions utilised ritual to socially discipline churchgoers, turning them both into devout believers and well-ordered subjects.

The analogy is strained somewhat by the role of the state. Whereas Reformation princes were fully involved in the confessionalisation of their realms, the Russian government played next to no role in the reform of *Edinoverie*. Firstly, even if the state did have an attitude towards *Edinoverie* at this late point, it was firmly on the side of the Synod's integrative plans. Secondly, Shleev and his backers supported those reformers who wanted to see the Church as a whole freed from its bureaucratic obligations to the Empire.

There was also a decided tension within the confessionalisation project. In order to assert dogmatic unity with the Church, Shleev had to concede the impact of the ritual re-evaluation but conceiving of a *Edinoverie* confession was dependent on asserting the importance of rituals and their further institutionalisation. Ritual tolerance was part of ascribed Orthodox confessional identity but ritual exclusivity was part of *Edinoverie*'s Old Believer inheritance. This was a contradiction inherent in *Edinoverie*'s very creation. It was a compromise settlement that relegated the importance of ritual whilst at the same time creating institutions and rules dedicated to preserving the old rites. This contradiction was never resolved and was often exploited by Shleev's opponents to condemn his ideas as being contrary to Orthodoxy.

Within this chapter, I will examine the main planks of Shleev's confessionalisation scheme: the creation of a *Edinoverie* bishop under the Synod, ritual standardisation, the creation of new institutions, raising the educational level of the laity and clergy and finally the utilisation of print media and scholarship to forge the sense of a wider religious community. In each section, I will consider the details of each part of the plan and the opposition that arose to it, largely from the missionary movement but also from within *Edinoverie* itself. All together, the project amounted to a plan of institutionalisation, standardisation, and centralisation aimed at forging a *Edinoverie* confession distinct from both Synodal Orthodoxy and the Old Believer schism. What must be emphasised is that this was only a confessional *project*. Almost all of its key proposals had not been attained by the time of the 1917 February Revolution. Confessionalisation is a long and slow process that takes decades or even centuries and it is therefore hardly surprising that it is

impossible to show that Shleev's plans had any influence beyond a narrow intellectual elite.

What Kind of Bishop?

A Synodal Bishop

With the declaration of toleration in April 1905, Shleev began to assemble support for a petition for a *Edinoverie* bishop. Ambitiously, he did not simply campaign among the Petersburg *edinovertsy* for support but also sent three lieutenants into the depths of Russia to find as many *Edinoverie* parishes as possible to sign his entreaty.⁵ This was to be the first national petition of the *edinovertsy*. The representatives of 120 parishes signed his new petition, making it the largest such petition to have ever come before the Synod.⁶

This document is remarkable in both its aggressive tone and its stridency. Shleev opened by distinguishing *Edinoverie* from Orthodoxy. *Edinoverie* was different from Orthodoxy in its 'monastic form of life.'⁷ Key to this was the presence of the electoral principle in *Edinoverie* parishes. Just as the brothers elected the abbots of monasteries, so *Edinoverie* parishioners elected their priests.⁸ Evidently this spirit was lacking amongst the Orthodox. Shleev considered *Edinoverie* parishes to be 'oases in a desert starved of piety (*oazisy v gladnoi blagochestiem pustyne*).'⁹ However, this ancient piety was under threat. Some priests, hand in hand with diocesan consistories, 'violate the order of *Edinoverie*-Old Believer church life, impoverish our monastic communal life, weaken discipline and distort and diminish our liturgy.'¹⁰ The theme of Orthodox violation of *Edinoverie* parishes and the religious life therein was constantly repeated throughout the petition and drew some of Shleev's harshest criticisms: 'many diocesan bishops still look on *Edinoverie* as a semi-schism, as a transitional step to Orthodoxy. In their opinion, *Edinoverie* is only tolerated and so with easy hearts they eradicate its parishes and depersonalise (*obezlichivaetsia*) its life.'¹¹

⁵ S. Shleev, *Edinoverie v svoem vnutrennem razvitii. (V raz''iasnenie ego malorasprostranennosti sredi staroobriadtsev)*. (St. Petersburg, 1910), 240–242. For the concerns of the bishop of Orenburg about the activities of one of Shleev's disciples in Ural'sk, see RGIA f. 796, op. 190 VI otd., 3 st., d.15, ll. 1-1ob. and ll. 14-15.

⁶ Ibid., 252. For the original, see RGIA f. 796, op. 190 VI otd., 3 st., d.15, ll. 2-5. It should be noted that this was not the only petition sent by Shleev in justification of his scheme. Either he or his party constantly petitioned the Synod or its individual hierarchs between 1905 and 1907.

⁷ Ibid., 241.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid., 242.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid., 243.

There was also a problem that the *edinovertsy* were not under the control of a single central authority: ‘*Edinoverie* suffers from its fragmentation. It is scattered over all Russia. In every diocese every *Edinoverie* parish occupies an isolated position in relation to other *Edinoverie* parishes. There is nothing surprising in the fact that some of them already do not have the attractive form which they should bear.’¹² Again, this form of organisation exposed the *edinovertsy* to the interference of local diocesan bishops. To prevent this, Shleev suggested the solution that was to be the crux of his plans throughout the period. The Synod should assume direct control over all *Edinoverie* parishes. After all, the Synod directly managed the old stauropegic monasteries precisely because ‘it desires the most appropriate hands to keep the ancient monastic traditions and the spirit of piety in these aforementioned monasteries.’¹³ Based on this, Shleev proposed to the Synod that they create a single *Edinoverie* bishop, directly subordinate to them, who would manage all the *edinovertsy* of the Russian Empire and thus save their parishes from the encroachments of the bishops and their consistories.¹⁴ In essence, the hope behind the creation of a *Edinoverie* bishop under the Synod was to create a distinct *Edinoverie* order within the Orthodox Church that would be almost entirely separate from both the bishops and the consistorial administrative machinery in the localities.

At the heart of this plan lay a new conception of *Edinoverie*. The reason that a centralised order under a *Edinoverie* bishop was necessary to prevent the bishops and consistories from interfering with it. They had to be stopped from doing so because *Edinoverie* preserved a ‘monastic principle’ that derived from the strict maintenance of a democratic parish order. This spirit had to be kept alive in order to reinvigorate the Orthodox Church itself. This thought rapidly spread among Shleev’s supporters and received further development. It is worth quoting the *Edinoverie* priest Terentii Shirokikh’s opening statement to the 1908 Viatka *Edinoverie* congress in full:

Edinoverie, as the last scion of the ancient popular and religious form of Russian life in the Church, protects in the majority of its followers (with a few exceptions) the inviolability of that form and with it the best national ideals, customs and traditions of families and the Church. The reverent attitude to the liturgy, the protection of a strict order in it, and the piety, moral strictness and religious habits in the domestic family lives of the *edinovertsy* serve as proofs

¹² Ibid., 245.

¹³ Ibid., 242. Stauropegic monasteries, in the context of imperial Russia, were those monasteries responsible to the Synod rather than local bishops: the Solovki monastery was one such institution.

¹⁴ Ibid., 245.

of this. I am not speaking just about the moral significance of *Edinoverie* in the matter of raising the simple dark masses in the spirit of true Orthodox devotion to the Church and the pious Russian antiquity (*starozhitnosti*), its popularism, [but also about the fact that] by its high calling, by the strength and depth of its popular Orthodox foundations and devotion to the Church, it should be that bridge which will join into one the two feuding families of the great Russian people – Orthodoxy and Old Belief. Because of this it deserves no less attention than the official Orthodox Church.¹⁵

Shirokikh's statement adds significant dimensions to the thought within the 1905 petition.¹⁶ What was being preserved was not just a 'monastic principle' but also an old, and thereby authentic, form of Russian popular religious tradition. It was not only the electoral parish order that would preserve this tradition but also the *Edinoverie* way of performing the liturgy, one that involved a strict attitude that permitted no abbreviations, innovations or worldly disruptions. This tradition was not only necessary to infuse the people with piety but also to extend a bridge to Old Belief. Therefore the missionary aims of *Edinoverie* were strictly subordinated to the requirement that its rituals and its parish life be maintained in all their purity. Then, and only then, could *Edinoverie* attract Old Believers back into the fold.

Three distinct intellectual trends can be seen within Shleev's initial argument and its subsequent development. Firstly there was a strain of the Russian populism that saw the common people as the true embodiment of Russian national identity. This is partially demonstrated by Shirokikh's constant use of the nouns *narod* and *narodnost'* and the adjective *narodnyi*. Furthermore it reflects the common trope that Old Belief was the most authentic manifestation of Russianness.¹⁷ Finally, the influence of certain ecclesiological theories that circulated after 1905 can be detected. These defined the Church, the *ecclesia*, not so much by the episcopate or the priesthood but rather the laity.¹⁸ These three trends mixed together to form an ecclesiological democratic populism

¹⁵ "Viatskii edinovercheskii s'ezd (10-17 iunia 1908 g.) i ego postanovleniia," *Viatskie eparkhial'nye vedomosti* no. 41, (1908): 1078–1079.

¹⁶ This was a direct copy of a statement published by Shleev's close associate, I. Riabukhin regarding a *Edinoverie* congress in Kursk in 1906. See I. Riabukhin, "Pervyi edinovercheskii s'ezd," *Pravda pravoslaviia*, no. 4 (1907): 15.

¹⁷ For the evolution of this view, see E. Krevsky, "Defining the Schism: Images and Interpretations of the Old Belief in Late Nineteenth-Century Russian Discourse" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Alberta, 2002).

¹⁸ V. Shevzov, *Russian Orthodoxy on the Eve of Revolution* (Oxford: New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 12–53.

that informed nearly all other aspects of Shleev's thought.¹⁹ It was probably for this reason that he sided with the group of thirty-two Petersburg priests since they had a strong commitment to a democratic concept of Christianity.

What we also see in the statements of Shleev and others is a sort of 'confessionalisation of national identity,' to borrow the fortuitous phrase of J. F. Harrington and H. W. Smith.²⁰ There was, of course, nothing strikingly original in the conflation between Orthodoxy and nationalism. What was relatively unique to the clerics considered here was that firstly Orthodoxy was strictly defined as pre-Petrine, secondly that *Edinoverie* was seen as the vehicle of national salvation, and thirdly that its role of as that vehicle was used to justify a scheme of confessionalisation.²¹ *Edinoverie's* gift to the Synodal Church was not simply Christian piety or even Orthodox piety: it was Russian piety. *Edinoverie* was considered to be the inheritor and protector of a native Russian Orthodox national identity, counterpoised to the westernisation, secularisation, and religious indifference that had engulfed the Russian state and its church following the reforms of Peter the Great. In a sense, then, *Edinoverie* was not simply a religious phenomenon but also was the bearer of true Russianness.

This was not just a reaction to increasing associations between nationalism and Orthodoxy. The ritual re-evaluation played a role too. Shleev, and Verkhovskii before him, were intellectually committed to the theory that rite was not a good enough reason for Church division. Ritual was not dogma. How then did they justify the importance they attached to rite? The answer was to connect the old rites directly with Russian nationality. 'Have they lost their nationality, have they stopped being Russian?' was Subbotin's question to Verkhovskii in regards to those who crossed themselves with three fingers.²² The conflation meant nationality and ritual was a reaction to the need for *Edinoverie*

¹⁹ See his criticism of the Viatka congress for failing to have the delegates elected by parishioners. S. Shleev, "Viatskii edinovercheskii eparkhial'nyi s''ezd," *Pravda Pravoslaviia* no. 16–17 (1908): 5.

²⁰ J. F. Harrington and H. W. Smith, "Confessionalization, Community, and State Building in Germany, 1555-1870," *The Journal of Modern History* 69, no. 1 (1997): 95.

²¹ John Strickland, for instance, has examined what he calls "clerical Orthodox patriotism," a conflation of Russianness with both Orthodoxy and the Church. Old Belief, he argues, posed a constant challenge to this patriotism because it offered a model of Orthodox Russianness that lay outside the Church's authority. J. Strickland, *The Making of Holy Russia: The Orthodox Church and Russian Nationalism Before the Revolution* (New York: Holy Trinity Publications, 2013), 23–24. Seen from this point of view, Shleev's religious-national conception of *Edinoverie* could have been a solution to the problem confronted by 'clerical Orthodox patriotism,' since *Edinoverie* both recognised the authority of the Church and maintained the same spirit of Old Believer piety.

²² N. Subbotin, *Moim obviniteliam i sudiiam* (Moscow, 1877), 77–78.

spokesmen to find some justification for the effort they spent trying to protect the old rites from the new.

Opposition

Shleev's petition was immediately contested both by other projects of reform and scathing critiques of his assumptions. The situation was further confused by the fact that Shleev's propositions were frequently misrepresented by his opponents: many frequently asserted that he wanted a *Edinoverie* episcopate, that is to say a large number of bishops who would form a hierarchy parallel to the Orthodox one.²³ One must always remember when discussing the issue of *Edinoverie* prelates that the principal fear of the Orthodox missionaries was that these bishops would go rogue. If they left the Church, they would be able to form a fully canonical Old Believer hierarchy that had none of the legitimacy problems that forever dogged the Belaia Krinitsa hierarchy. As Griniakin commented, 'one bishop for the *edinovertsy* soon will not be enough. It will be necessary to give them a second. And, according to the first apostolic rule, two bishops can, if need be, ordain a third...i.e. then the *Edinoverie* episcopate can do without the Synod. And the schism will be ready...'²⁴

It is significant that very few *edinovertsy* or Orthodox churchmen attacked the idea of *Edinoverie* bishops outright, at least to begin with. Even a missionary assembly held in Nizhnii Novgorod on 12 August 1905 backed some form of administrative change. Here they proposed a commission under the Synod rather than a bishop. The chairman of this commission would not possess any special rights or pre-eminence in relation to either *Edinoverie* or the Orthodox Church. Although the chairman would be a bishop (one of the members of the Synod without a diocese), he would not be called a *Edinoverie* bishop and he would be under no obligation to conduct the liturgy according to the old rituals.²⁵ Such a commission would therefore dodge the dangers inherent in ordaining *Edinoverie* bishops, although it would still further the institutionalisation of ritual difference. Its existence would recognise the idea that the *edinovertsy* were sufficiently distinct to

²³ The idea of creating a separate *Edinoverie* hierarchy was rarely discussed and Shleev himself never mentioned it. A measure was floated in 1906 at the Pre-Councilar Commission to "give the *edinovertsy* a wholly complete church hierarchy." This created some dissent. Professor Ivanovskii and Protopharch Nikolai Kastorskii stated that this part of the resolution was so important that it needed to be discussed separately. See *Zhurnaly i protokoly zasedanii vysochaishche uchrezhdennago predsbornogo prisutstviia* (St. Petersburg, 1907), 235.

²⁴ V. M. Skvortsov, ed., *Pervyi Vserossiiskii edinovercheskii s'ezd* (St. Petersburg, 1912), 72.

²⁵ V. Senatov, "O smysle edinovercheskogo episkopstva," *Missionerskoe obozrenie*, no. 16 (1905): 834.

warrant their own form of centralised administration. The commission idea periodically resurfaced after 1905 and received its moment in the sun at the first National *Edinoverie* Congress in 1912 where it was passed as a compromise solution.²⁶

What were the common objections cited against Shleev's plan? The first problem was theological. The idea that the *edinovertsy* could have a Synodal bishop was impossible because it would contravene rule eight of the first Ecumenical Council (325) about having two independent bishops in one region.²⁷ The scheme raised the spectre of 'dual authority' (*dvoevlastie*) because the Orthodox bishops would lose control over parts of their flock to the new bishop in Petersburg. Sovereignty over their dioceses would be undermined.²⁸

Missionary concerns often predominated. I. Polianskii, typifying such arguments, noted that a bishop would not matter to those Old Believers who were already aware that the *edinovertsy* and Orthodox were completely united and it would be useless in convincing those who were not conscious of that fact. Their dislike of *Edinoverie* stemmed not from a lack of its own episcopal leadership but from the fact that it existed within a 'heretical' church: 'while there exists in the soul of an Old Believer a fear of a heretical church, he cannot enter into communion with it and accept *Edinoverie*.'²⁹ As the 1917 meeting with the Belaia Krinisa hierarchy shows, he was entirely correct in this assertion. Dmitrii Aleksandrov went further in 1912 when he declared that the *edinovertsy* were mistaken if they thought the creation of a *Edinoverie* 'episcopate' would bring the Old Believers back to the Church: 'the uncanonical establishment of a special *Edinoverie* episcopate will not bring the Old Believers closer to the Church of Christ but still more alienate them from it, since they do not desire to be ministered by uncanonical clerics.'³⁰ Here he combined the argument about the missionary efficacy of the proposed hierarchs with canonical objections. The Old Believers, he suggested, were so obsessed with canonical rectitude that they would object to *Edinoverie* hierarchs whose mere existence violated the ancient rules of the Church.

²⁶ Skvortsov, *Pervyi Vserossiiskii*, 20.

²⁷ I. Polianskii, *Nuzhen li edinovercheskii episkop?* (Moscow, 1912), 11.

²⁸ Shleev and others pointed to the existence of the military clergy: despite being scattered throughout Russia in garrisons, they were not dependent on the local hierarchs but on the Protopresbyter of the Army and Fleet clergy under the Synod. However, the Moscow missionary I. Polianskii refuted this, stating 'it is not necessary to introduce a new violation of the canons but to reduce the old ones [i.e. the office of the Protopresbyter], all the more so now when people are persistently talking about the reform of Church life on strict canonical principles.' see *ibid.*, 13.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 12.

³⁰ Skvortsov, *Pervyi Vserossiiskii*, 57.

Finally, there were those objections generated by the realisation that the plan amounted to establishing *Edinoverie* as a separate confession. Griniakin thought that Shleev would go so far as to try and get his own patriarch if he got a bishop or even a commission:

Therefore he [the Synodal bishop] will not be *under* the Synod but *with* the Synod, he will not be *under its* authority but *along side* it as the representative of some *autocephalous* church without whose permission not a single Synodal order can penetrate *Edinoverie*. The difference between the Synod and the *Edinoverie* bishop or commission will only be the fact that the Synod will be an official collegial institution (a heretical concoction of Peter the Great and Feofan Prokopovich, in the opinion of the schismatics and part of the ‘*edinovertsy*’) and a ‘*Edinoverie*’ bishop or commission will stand as a *patriarch* for the Orthodox Old Believers – a descendant of Patriarch Iosif.³¹

What Griniakin had realised was that both the bishop and a commission would serve to further institutionalise the ritual basis of *Edinoverie*. Why should ritual distinction serve as the basis for a separate form of administration? Some of the Orthodox faithful believed that eating potatoes, the theatre and smoking were deadly sins. Should they get a hierarchy or a commission under the Synod as well?³² The point the missionary was making was that since ritual was ‘a middling, inessential matter’ there was no point in institutionalising it. The fact that the *edinovertsy* ‘consider these rituals not as a transitive matter but one so important that because of it they even require special hierarchical or administrative leadership (*vozglavie*). And this means they already stand on the schismatic path...’³³ In other words, Shleev’s scheme amounted to nothing less than a rejection of the ritual re-evaluation, which in itself was a rejection of the ascribed Orthodox confessional identity. ‘That even people with higher theological education’ were ‘prepared to pester about the formation of a special church parallel to the official Orthodox confession, with a special regulation and a special episcopate, because of ritual’ could only make the acceptance of the ritual re-evaluation among the ‘simple people’ more difficult.³⁴

Griniakin’s reaction marked a new sort of thinking. The emergence of confessional integration and separatist confessionalisation posed the problems inherent in *Edinoverie*’s creation very precisely. The ritual re-evaluation had to be accepted by all parties if the

³¹ Ibid., 72.

³² Ibid., 73–74.

³³ Ibid., 76.

³⁴ Ibid., 69.

incorporation of *Edinoverie* into the Orthodox confession was to succeed but this ran at variance to the institutionalisation of ritual difference that was at the heart of Shleev's attempt to distinguish *Edinoverie* from the official Church. That Shleev and his supporters so clearly placed ritual at the basis of their reform scheme was demonstrative to people like Griniakin that they had not accepted the ritual re-evaluation and thus had failed to accept a key tenet of Orthodox confessional identity, that of ritual tolerance.

Two other episcopal proposals enjoyed popularity between 1905 and 1912. Firstly, there was the idea of subordinating a bishop or bishops to administrative structures that would be brought into being by the anticipated Church Council. The other was the idea of creating *Edinoverie* suffragan bishops. This would avoid several of the criticisms cited above. It would not violate the canons of having more than one bishop in a single locality and it would keep the *edinovertsy* fully subordinated to the Orthodox diocesan prelates to whom the suffragans were responsible.³⁵

The most detailed design for a system of suffragan bishops came from G. M. Senatov, a Moscow *edinoverets* writing on behalf of a larger group of his co-religionists.³⁶ Whereas Shleev had opened his proposal by contrasting the differences between *Edinoverie* and Orthodoxy, the Muscovites emphasised unity: 'We believe and confess the unity of the Church and therefore we believe and confess that the *edinovertsy* are of one mind and one grace with the Orthodox Church and that the Orthodox Church is also of one mind and one grace with the *edinovertsy*.'³⁷ Unlike Shleev, who focussed his wrath on the Orthodox bishops themselves, the Muscovites condemned the consistories for interfering with *Edinoverie* religious life and in doing so violating the rules of Metropolitan Platon. Indeed, the bishops escaped with only indirect criticism: 'thanks to this circumstance [consistorial interference], the bishops do not have any chance to be the bishops they ought to be.'³⁸

³⁵ Suffragans were also a subject of debate in Orthodoxy at the time. See Savva (Tutunov), *Eparkhial'nye reformy* (Moscow, 2011).

³⁶ Senatov, along with several other Muscovites, was working on his scheme at the same time as Shleev was busy garnering signatures for his initial petition in May 1905: indeed, the arrival of Shleev's emissaries in the old capital caused a split among the leading figures of the community. Although many decided to sign Shleev's appeal, including the priest who had been tentatively selected as the candidate for the new position of Moscow *Edinoverie* suffragan, Senatov continued with his labours and submitted the completed petition to Metropolitan Vladimir (Bogoiavlenskii). See Shleev, *Edinoverie*, 250.

³⁷ V. Senatov, "Kakoi episkop nuzhen edinoveriiu?," *Missionerskoe obozrenie*, no. 10 (1905): 39.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 41.

Senatov fully exploited the fears that the Orthodox missionaries had regarding the potential for division hiding within Shleev's project: 'with the establishment of a *Edinoverie* episcopate, *Edinoverie* turns into a special independent church. It does not simply create a church within a church but another church along side the Orthodox Church, also Orthodox, also fully legitimate.'³⁹ In contrast, his own scheme was 'to unite the Russian people into a single flock of Christ and into a single Church of God.'⁴⁰

The essence of the *Edinoverie* question for Senatov was a question of how the Orthodox and the *edinovertsy* acted in the parishes. Indeed, he went so far as to declare the question to be about 'the every day existence of Russian culture in the widest and deepest sense of that word.'⁴¹ Shleev, he claimed, was fighting for an administrative and central solution to a cultural and local problem. It would be impossible to fully divorce *edinovertsy* from their local Orthodox prelates because they lived among the Orthodox themselves: they married them, they had children together, and those children went to Orthodox schools.⁴² Ultimately, therefore, the *Edinoverie* bishop in St. Petersburg would be able to achieve nothing without the co-operation of Orthodox bishops, which might not be forthcoming.⁴³ He concluded that 'the Petersburg petition is utterly saturated with contempt for Orthodoxy and, on the soil of this contempt, it turns into an act of crude coercion.'⁴⁴

The contrast between the two petitions demonstrates precisely the confessionalising character of Shleev's plans. Senatov was inured in the conception of *Edinoverie* proposed by Pavel Prusskii and Subbotin. Indeed, Senatov made this explicit by constantly referencing Pavel. For him, unity in all things, and not just doctrine, was the necessary precondition of true *Edinoverie*. Any administrative reforms should be aimed at easing the communal life between the two groups and ensuring that *Edinoverie*'s privileges were more rigorously enforced whilst still maintaining the canonical subordination of *Edinoverie* communities to the local prelate. Suffragan bishops would do just that. They would provide the *edinovertsy* with much desired episcopal services and relieve the diocesan bishop of the time consuming task of managing *Edinoverie* parishes, making it much less likely that such business would be dispatched to the consistory for resolution.

³⁹ Ibid., 33.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 39.

⁴¹ Senatov, "O smysle," 827.

⁴² Ibid., 830.

⁴³ Ibid., 831.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 835–836.

However, the suffragan bishop would remain responsible to the diocesan prelate, thus preserving the relationship between the *edinovertsy* and their local church hierarchy.

There was also a localising tendency to Senatov's plans. He was principally concerned with the *edinovertsy* of Moscow and considered the other communities only as an afterthought. Keeping the *edinovertsy* dependent on their local prelates would also continue to foster dependency on local conditions and personalities. Senatov thought of this as a virtue since suffragans could be far more responsive to problems emerging on the ground than a distant Synodal prelate in Petersburg and would be much better placed to forge agreements with Orthodox priests and hierarchs in the vicinity. Shleev, on the other hand, placed all his hopes on centralising *Edinoverie*. With the creation of a single prelate in charge of all the *edinovertsy* of the Russian Empire, they would be forged into a single community, directly subordinate to the Synod, thus bypassing both local prelates and their consistories. Shleev therefore was less focussed on fostering unity on the ground between Orthodox and *edinovertsy* and emphasised the need for administrative separation in order to facilitate the distinctive rituals and religious life of the *edinovertsy*.

Senatov remained a follower of the idea that *Edinoverie* was fully and indivisibly a part of the Orthodox confession. Reforms had to enhance the process of confessional integration felt in the provinces. Shleev was committed to the idea of *Edinoverie* as a confession in and of itself, granted this status by its rituals and preservation of the ancient piety.

Official Responses

The Synod was loath to take action on any of the petitions for a *Edinoverie* bishop before a general Church Council was convened. On 20 November 1905, in response to a petition from the *edinovertsy* of the capital, Antonii (Vadkovskii) made this explicit, telling the Synod that the question had to go before the new Council for discussion.⁴⁵ The matter thus was referred to the Pre-Conciliar Commission.

On 17 March 1906, the Commission's sixth section came to the issue of the bishops. After discussing the schemes of Senatov and Shleev, it decided to largely endorse Shleev's proposal. In its resolution, the section concluded that the regrettable violation of the *Edinoverie* liturgical order by diocesan hierarchs necessitated a bishop.⁴⁶ The idea of

⁴⁵ RGIA, f. 796, op. 190, VI otd. 3 st., d. 15, l. 107.

⁴⁶ *Zhurnaly i protokoly*, 224.

suffragan bishops was dismissed. The rank had been taken from the example of the Catholic Church and such bishops would not satisfy the *edinovertsy*.⁴⁷

However, the proposal that the section provided was somewhat different from Shleev's own scheme. It was decided to attach the project of *Edinoverie* bishops to a reform being discussed in another section of the Pre-Conciliar Commission, namely the restructuring of the Orthodox Church into metropolitan districts.⁴⁸ A *Edinoverie* bishop would be attached to each metropolitan district: he would then be in control of all the *Edinoverie* parishes and establishments in that district. Orthodox bishops would not be deprived of the right to command *Edinoverie* parishioners and clergy.⁴⁹ The section was attempting to combine Shleev's idea with Senatov's. Giving each metropolitan district a bishop would help centralise *Edinoverie* to a certain degree but at the same time would ensure that the *Edinoverie* bishop was still responsible to an Orthodox metropolitan and was still in touch with other local Orthodox bishops. This meant that the appointment of *Edinoverie* bishops was now tied in with a reform that absolutely could not be passed by the Synod. It was of such a sweeping nature that only a Church Council could possibly ratify it.

This support bolstered Shleev in his future arguments with the Russian Orthodox missionaries. All being said and done, the Pre-Conciliar Commission gave Shleev and his supporters no little reason to be optimistic. A scheme for *Edinoverie* bishops had been proposed that at least made some concessions to Shleev's point of view. The fact that all these resolutions had been proclaimed by the commission preparing for a Russian Church Council, a body whose authority would exceed that of the Synod, was another cause for celebration.

Rituals and the Liturgy

Standardising Ritual

The defence of the pre-Nikonian rites were at the root of Shleev's confessionalisation schema. They provided the justification for a bishop or a commission in Petersburg and were the source of *Edinoverie*'s missionary attractiveness. The rituals made *Edinoverie* an incubator of past traditions and piety that could reinvigorate the moribund Church, meaning that *Edinoverie* had a value far beyond its role of bringing Old Believers back from the schism. Shleev made the existential import of observing the rituals abundantly

⁴⁷ Ibid., 225.

⁴⁸ For discussion of the metropolitan districts, see (Tutunov), *Eparkhial'nye Reformy*.

⁴⁹ *Zhurnaly i protokoly*, 225.

clear: ‘*Edinoverie* parishes exist because there are people who desire to pray and live in the old fashion. *Edinoverie* churches were established in order to perform the liturgy with precise observation of the old customs and rituals. With another liturgy the *Edinoverie* churches will lose the meaning of their existence, they will not satisfy the aim with which they were established.’⁵⁰

However, there was a problem. It was widely recognised that there was absolutely no uniformity in the matter of *Edinoverie* ritual. Different dioceses, and even different parishes within a single eparchy, maintained their own local traditions. Therefore the question had to be raised: precisely what ritual order would the new bishop seek to defend and standardise?

The Viatka *Edinoverie* congress in 1908 had a particularly interesting discussion on the issue when it discussed firstly whether ‘fusion’ (*sbliizhenie*) of the *Edinoverie* liturgy with the Orthodox one was desirable and secondly whether uniformity in the *Edinoverie* divine service was achievable. Everyone, including the missionaries, provided a negative answer to the first question. ‘The uselessness of this was obvious for all. Those *Edinoverie* churches in which this fusion is practised are marked by disorder in the liturgy, which is explained either by arbitrariness or a lack of knowledge of the regulations.’⁵¹ They also concluded that individual priests should not be allowed to subject the liturgy to their own personal review and that uniformity was both possible and achievable. The discussion only heated up when it came to discussing what this uniformity would consist of: no-one seemed able to agree. Some argued that the ‘innovations’ (mostly the addition of phrases to chants at key points in the liturgy) had the corrected Nikonian liturgical books as their source. Others pointed out that such additions were present in A. I. Ozerskii’s 1862 compilation of old texts but were not contained in extant versions of the books from the reigns of the first five Patriarchs.⁵² The debate became so heated (Orthodox delegates objected to the reference of Nikonian rituals as ‘innovations’) that the matter had to be put aside and left without resolution.

⁵⁰ *Pervyi Vserossiiskii s''ezd pravoslavnykh staroobriadtsev (edinovertsev)* (St. Petersburg, 1912), 71.

⁵¹ “Viatskii edinovercheskii s''ezd (10-17 iunia 1908 g.) i ego postanovleniia,” no. 42, 1090.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 1091; Ozerskii’s book was published (in Old Church Slavonic) by the Brotherhood of St. Petr the Metropolitan and was aimed at pointing out the liturgical flaws of the Old Believers. See A. I. Ozerskii, *Vypiski iz staropis'mennykh, staropechatnykh i drugikh knig, svidetel'stvuiushchiia o sviatosti sobornoi i apostol'skoi tserkvi i o neobkhodimosti dlia dostizheniia spasenia*, 2 vols. (Moscow, 1862).

However, the missionary Vasilii Marakulin put his finger directly on the pulse of the problem in a special opinion attached to the protocols. Uniformity among *Edinoverie* parishes was ‘not possible since the *edinovertsy* serve by the old books but, as is well known, in these there are many contradictions and variant readings: in order to achieve uniformity, it would be necessary for the *edinovertsy* to reject the old books themselves but this would mean they have stopped being *edinovertsy*.’⁵³ Marakulin’s point was that the *edinovertsy* defined themselves by the usage of the old texts but these were so imperfect that trying to form a uniform liturgy from them would require editing. In other words, the *edinovertsy* would embark on precisely the same kind of correction project as Patriarch Nikon in the 1650s. The reliance on numerous and contradictory old texts meant that ‘it is natural that the among the *edinovertsy* there should be disagreement over religious requirements and rituals.’⁵⁴

Shleev himself was constrained by the problem pointed out by Marakulin. Despite the fact that he reiterated repeatedly that a uniform liturgy was necessary, he never made any definitive step to defining precisely what that liturgy would be. No doubt he was aware that any definitive statement would prove controversial, given the tendency of *edinovertsy* to argue intensely over ritual adaptations that violated their local customs. The closest he came was to use his journal firstly to reprint Old Church Slavonic prayers in a regularly appearing appendix and secondly to furnish immensely detailed descriptions of the liturgies performed in his own church in Petersburg.⁵⁵

The only arena where some progress was made was towards the reprinting of the sixteenth century episcopal *typikon*, a book that would guide Orthodox prelates (and presumably any new *Edinoverie* bishops) in the performance of the type of liturgy allowed to members of the hierarchy.⁵⁶ This was accomplished in 1910 by the *Edinoverie* typography.⁵⁷ That Shleev not only supported this idea but also was enthusiastic about it to the point of reiterating the Commission’s proscription at the 1912 congress should alert

⁵³ “Viatskii edinovercheskii s’ezd,” 1093.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 1092. Notably the Fourth All Russian Missionary Congress came to the same conclusion in 1908: see “Voprosy edinoveriia na IV Vserossiiskom missionerskom s’ezde v Kieve,” *Missionerskoe obozrenie* no. 4–5 (1908): 604.

⁵⁵ Indeed, spreading knowledge about the liturgy and rites became *Pravda pravoslaviia*’s programme in 1907. See S. Shleev, “Vnimaniiu edinoveritsev,” *Pravda pravoslaviia*, no. 2 (1-2): 1–2.

⁵⁶ He was no doubt assisted by the Pre-Councilar Commission when it decreed on 15 March 1906 that they would petition the soon to be held Church Council about creating a new edition of the old *typikon* with some minor corrections. See *Zhurnaly i protokoly*, vol. 2, 220–221.

⁵⁷ *Arkhieieiskii sluzhebnik* (Moscow, 1910).

us to the limits of his attempts to delineate *Edinoverie* from Orthodoxy.⁵⁸ He was in favour of allowing Orthodox bishops and priests to perform the liturgy for the *edinovertsy* so long as they did so with the old books.

In the absence of any positive idea of what a uniform *Edinoverie* liturgy would look like, Shleev and his backers could only define it by what it was not: the Nikonian liturgy of the mainstream Orthodox Church. What had to be eradicated were elements of the divine service that had entered into *Edinoverie* churches during the century in which it had been unified with Russian Orthodoxy. In so far as there was a positive definition of what *Edinoverie* ritual was, it relied on the most indisputable aspects of the Old Believer inheritance: crossing with two fingers, use of the old books as a collection of texts and other pre-Nikonian practices.

The Problems of Polyphony

Unlike other church practices, very few *edinovertsy* or Orthodox would dispute the key characteristics of *Edinoverie* church singing. As such it took up the lion's share of the attention in discussions on ritual.⁵⁹ *Edinoverie* singing was distinguished from that which occurred in the Russian Orthodox Church on two essential points: the first was that it was unison singing (rather than polyphonic) and the second was the ancient 'hook' system of notation. Thus the older musical form was known as note chanting (*znamennoe raspev*) while the newer one was called part-singing (*partesnoe penie*).

In the 1912 congress, Shleev, Father Grigorii Dribintsev, and Prince Aleksei Ukhtomskii went into some detail as to why the unison singing was so important. One reason was that the old chanting was an ancient tradition of Orthodoxy that *Edinoverie* had preserved from the westernising tendencies introduced into the Russian Church by the Petrine reforms. Shleev in particular focussed on its ecumenical character: 'by using monophonic singing, the *edinovertsy* keep the customs of the Ecumenical Church. The eastern churches, the Greek and others, have kept their monophonic singing to the present day.

⁵⁸ *Pervyi Vserossiiskii s'ezd*, 69.

⁵⁹ Discussions on singing not only consumed much time in the four *Edinoverie* congresses held between 1906 and 1912 but also received substantial commentary in the Church press, both central and provincial. For an example, see M. O., "O penii v edinovercheskiuk tserkvakh i ispolniteliakh onogo edinovercheskikh psalomshchikakh," *Tobol'skie eparkhial'nye vedomosti*, no. 12, 13, 14 (1909): 307–11, 335–38, 360–66.

Only the Great Russian (*velikorossiiskaia*) Church has assimilated Italian singing and under different pretexts has tried to introduce it into *Edinoverie* parishes.⁶⁰

Prince Ukhtomskii emphasised that if you ‘take from the Old Believer church the general strict (*ustavnyi*) character of the liturgy, that is to say ‘holy obedience’ to the church regulations, and take away the humble motifs of the note chanting, the Old Believer church stops being an Old Believer church, although the book of [Patriarch] Iosif, the two fingered sign of the cross, and the prayer cushions (*podruchniki*) remain in it.’⁶¹ In other words, the singing was so important to both the *edinovertsy* and the Old Believers that its removal would strip them of their identity.

In his long speech, Ukhtomskii made it transparent why he opposed the polyphonic music of mainstream Russian Orthodoxy. The hook note singing was designed for use in services to create the right atmosphere among the worshippers. Its simplicity, the absence of ‘variegation’ in tone, concentrated all thoughts on the single activity of prayer. Western music, on the other hand, had developed as secular entertainment and it was stuffed full of ‘superfluous, incautious musical effects’ that only distracted churchgoers.⁶² The blame for introducing this music lay on ‘well intentioned Russian liberalism’ which had forgotten that ‘*Church art in general and church singing in particular are impossible to divide from their natural world and their natural sphere – from the Church and the choir.*’⁶³ Church music was for the Church and secular music was for the concert hall.

Ukhtomskii therefore castigated the music found in many Orthodox choirs for its association with the western, secular and liberal world of educated society: such music could not possibly focus the attention of worshippers on acts of ascetic prayer. Only the monophonic chanting, free from unnecessary artistic accoutrements, could achieve such a goal. In Ukhtomskii’s thought, the older style was used to distinguish not only *Edinoverie* from Orthodoxy, but also the heavenly from the worldly, Russia from the west and the Church from the secular. *Edinoverie* singing was formed into one of those traditions that could revitalise a Russian Orthodoxy that had fallen too far into the orbit of the westernised and bureaucratic secular world. Revival of the old form of singing was also a way of disciplining the thoughts of believers in churches, focussing them on the act of prayer.

⁶⁰ *Pervyi Vserossiiskii s’ezd*, 73.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 88.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 92.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 102.

Dribintsev was more practical, focussing on ways to reverse any intrusion of polyphonic music into *Edinoverie* churches and improve the performance of the monophonic chant. The standard of *Edinoverie* singing was generally thought to be poor. One critical observer wrote that a *Edinoverie* choir ‘was not an assembly of singers but a crowd of the blind who gropingly follow an one-eyed singer, fearing to stumble. Indeed the leading singer scarcely trusts himself. What comes out is not singing but a kind of unimaginable chaos.’⁶⁴ Thus Dribintsev recounted a plan to form *Edinoverie* schools for teaching the old music. He proposed a five-point programme. The establishment of singing schools with two year courses that would both teach singing and the liturgical regulations, the periodic holding of musical lessons in major cities for clergy, the organisation of amateur choirs, compulsory teaching of the hook notes in *Edinoverie* parish schools and, finally, the publication of cheap choral books with the hook notations.⁶⁵

All of Dribintsev’s proposals point to the difficulties that standardisation would confront. Even being able to read the hook notation was a rare skill and those few who possessed it tended to be Old Believers.⁶⁶ No less problematic was the real lack of hymnbooks where the hook notes could be properly presented. Such a hymnbook had been printed in Kiev but had not received wide distribution.⁶⁷ Nor was there any consensus about the form hymnbooks should take. By 1917, the *edinovertsy* were still debating whether the hook notes should be published alongside the western system of notation in order to ease the process of learning the former.⁶⁸ The Viatka congress was stumped by both problems, concluding that whilst unison singing was desirable ‘since there is no supply of experts in this singing, where possible singing [should be performed] with four voices [i.e. the polyphonic form] but with observation of the old note chanting, for which hook notes which can be placed on ledger lines for the convenience of performance.’⁶⁹ The Viatka clergy were therefore in favour incorporating old elements into the new singing simply because there were no teachers available to instruct singers in the older form.

⁶⁴ S. I. Sungurov, “O drevnem kriukovom penii i penchesko-uchitel’skoi edinovercheskoi shkole,” *Pravda pravoslaviia*, no. 12 (1906): 7.

⁶⁵ *Pervyi Vserossiiskii s’ezd*, 82–83.

⁶⁶ Even the Old Believers confronted challenges in regard to singing. As V. Dynnikova comments, ‘as a result [of persecution], by the beginning of the twentieth century the majority of Old Believer parishes in Russia were faced with serious problems like the low literacy rates of singers in the hook notes, the absence of competent and sensitive conductors and an unthinking relationship with the texts of the hymns performed.’ See V. Dynnikova, *Morozovskii khor v kontekste staroobriadcheskoi kultury nachala XX veka* (Moscow, 2009), 75.

⁶⁷ *Pervyi Vserossiiskii s’ezd*, 82.

⁶⁸ *Vtoroi Vserossiiskii s’ezd pravoslavnykh staroobriadtsev (edinoveritsev) v N. Novgorode 23-28 iulia 1917 goda*. (Petrograd, 1917), 62.

⁶⁹ “Viatskii edinovercheskii s’ezd,” 1094.

Dribintsev's scheme is important in two major respects. Firstly, the requirement that schools be opened for the teaching of the hook notation marked another way in which ritual distinction would be institutionalised. The need for perfection in church singing was an integral component of the need for other *Edinoverie* educational establishments. Secondly, such schools would liberate the *edinovertsy* from the hostile tutelage of the Old Believers. They were thus intended not only to improve that aspect of the liturgy that most delineated them from the Orthodox Church but also to sever the dependent relationship that existed between *Edinoverie* and Old Belief.⁷⁰ This was the separatist confessionalisation project in a nutshell. Whilst distinguishing themselves from the Orthodox, Shleev's *edinovertsy* also sought to find ways to maintain distance between themselves and the schismatics.

Administration

The Brotherhood

Edinoverie had achieved its first and only religious fraternity in Bol'shoe Murashkino, the extraordinarily well-organised, and wealthy parish in Nizhnii Novgorod. However, this organisation had limited itself purely to the concerns of that church and no attempt was made to even give it a wider diocesan significance, let alone a national scope. Thus from 1905 onwards Shleev petitioned about forming a *Edinoverie* national brotherhood, one that would not simply serve a single diocese but all of the *edinovertsy* of the Empire. Shleev stipulated however that a national congress would be needed first so that the rules and regulations of the brotherhood could be collectively formulated.⁷¹

In a 1906 article, I. Egorov went into some depth as to why such a brotherhood was necessary. He complained that *Edinoverie* led a 'private life but not a social one.'⁷² His point was that there were absolutely no connections between individual *Edinoverie* parishes and so there was no conception of a wider *Edinoverie* community. He noted that even in an individual parish 'among the strong and rich parishioners, even the thought almost never occurs to be curious and know how their weak and poor co-religionists live, what they need and how best to help them with their needs.'⁷³ To put it more precisely, the lack of communal institutions had led to the disintegration of a feeling of community,

⁷⁰ *Pervyi Vserossiiskii s'ezd*, 77–78.

⁷¹ According to a petition submitted by Shleev's parishioners on 13 October 1906, the idea had come from the ober-procurator A. D. Obolenskii. RGIA, f. 796, op. 190 VI otd., 3 st., d.15, l. 89

⁷² I. Egorov, "K voprosu o Vserossiiskom bratstve staro-pravoslavnykh," *Pravda pravoslaviia*, no. 13 (1906): 11.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 12.

leading parishioners to become narrowly concerned with their own well being. This had led to the general collapse of that example of the religious community *par excellence*, the monastery. ‘Therefore, the very first essential and necessary task and *podvig* of the *edinovertsy*, pastors and flocks, must be to closely join themselves together firstly in one diocese and then throughout Russia as members of one living body of Christ.’⁷⁴ A brotherhood would be a necessary component in such a process. As with Shleev’s appeal for a bishop, Egorov’s argument was related closely to forging the *edinovertsy* of the Empire into a single flock.

The Synod were ultimately no more sympathetic to this idea than they were to *Edinoverie* bishops and repeatedly denied the requests. This was not necessarily because of their attitude to the *edinovertsy*. Discussions for a national union of Orthodox brotherhoods had proven stormy in sessions of the Pre-Conciliar Commission and the idea had ultimately been shot down.⁷⁵ Equally, Shleev faced opposition from those *edinovertsy* who did not belong to his party. At the 1908 Kiev missionary congress, K. M. Ershov, the overseer of the *Edinoverie* typography, declared that the national brotherhood would be useless since no-one would donate to it: certainly no *edinovertsy* in Moscow would bother to contribute.⁷⁶

The Synod did make one minor concession. The *edinovertsy* of Petersburg would be allowed a diocesan brotherhood under the Nikol’skii church. Opening its doors on 2 June 1908, the new organisation’s regulations largely limited it to the provision of aid to the poor and managing educational establishments.⁷⁷ Shleev’s wrote two articles on the new organisation. In the first, he reiterated the credo of his confessionalisation project. He took the presence of Orthodox on the brotherhood’s council to signal the death of the idea of that *Edinoverie* was purely a transitive phenomena: ‘Conversations about the fact that *Edinoverie* should be hastened on the path of assimilation of the life of the Great Russian Church as fast as possible have lost their shrill tone.’⁷⁸ He then turned to what *Edinoverie* could give the Church, what he called its ‘self-worth’ (*samotsennost’*). Criticising the parish reform programme formulated by the Synod whereby parishioners would only be

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ For a discussion of the problem of brotherhoods in the Church, see A. Kravetskii, *Tserkovnaia missiia v epokhu peremen (mezhdru propoved’iu i dialogom)*. (Moscow, 2012), 187–195.

⁷⁶ Uchastnik s’ezda, “Vpechatleniia ot Kievskogo missionerskogo s’ezda,” *Pravda pravoslaviia*, no. 24–25 (1908): 16.

⁷⁷ *Ustav edinovercheskogo bratstva pri Nikol’skoi, v Nikolaevskoi ul. g. S. Peterburga, tserkvi*. (St. Petersburg, 1911).

⁷⁸ S. Shleev, “K otkrytiiu edinovercheskogo bratstva,” *Pravda pravoslaviia*, no. 20–21 (1908): 2.

given a consultative voice, he argued that ‘*Edinoverie* with its pure Orthodox self consciousness remains the only haven where the Orthodox parishioner can not only direct his duties but also use all his rights.’⁷⁹

The second article referred to what the brotherhood should strive to achieve and reflected much of what Egorov had discussed in terms of community. If the brotherhood concerned itself only with gathering contributions from members, then it would fall flat and would be little distinguished from all the other Orthodox brotherhoods across the Empire. Instead it had to be ‘a union of zealots, a union of chosen Christians, dedicated to the revival of parish life.’⁸⁰ Shleev saw a particular role for women in the new organisation since they were permitted a voice in the brotherhood that they were denied in parish management. He argued that women would be able to serve a matriarchal role in charitable affairs, almost functioning as surrogate mothers for the poor members of the parish.⁸¹ In terms of contemporary Orthodox debates on the role of women in the Church, such a statement puts Shleev firmly in the liberal or reformist camp, which used ‘prevailing ideals of domesticity and femininity to expand the boundaries of acceptable social and civic activity for women.’⁸²

Overall, his article was dedicated to the role the brotherhood had to play in overcoming self-interest and religious indifference in order to forge a real community. It was a community that would include the poor as well as the rich, men as well as women.⁸³ The discussion on the brotherhood contained in this article (as well as the others we have discussed) show a belief that it was through community, rather than through the individual, that religiosity was best developed and manifested.

Superintendents

From 1845, the *edinovertsy* had possessed superintendents and thus had already taken a step to achieving something of a distinct administrative framework within the Orthodox Church. However, as Shleev noted, ‘*Edinoverie* superintendents do not always exist. We

⁷⁹ Ibid., 3.

⁸⁰ S. Shleev, “Edinovercheskoe bratstvo,” *Pravda pravoslaviia*, no. 30–31 (1908): 4.

⁸¹ Ibid., 3.

⁸² W. G. Wagner, “‘Orthodox Domesticity’: Creating a Social Role for Women,” in M. D. Steinberg and H. J. Coleman, eds., *Sacred Stories: Religion and Spirituality in Modern Russia* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2007), 127.

⁸³ For contemporary debates on the issue of community in Russian Orthodoxy, see V. Shevzov, “Letting the People into Church. Reflections on Orthodoxy and Community in Late Imperial Russia,” in V. A. Kivelson and R. H. Greene, eds., *Orthodox Russia. Belief and Practice under the Tsars*. (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), 59–77.

know of dioceses with the presence of 10-12 *Edinoverie* parishes that, to this day, do not have Orthodox-Old Believer priestly elders.’⁸⁴ The *edinovertsy* therefore had to push for their rights under the 1845 edict and they had to ensure that it was *Edinoverie* priests who were chosen. Orthodox clergy could not be chosen because the superintendent had to be close to the *edinovertsy* in spirit: ‘in truth, the superintendent is a spiritual guide of all the clergy under his supervision, he is an advisor in all the difficult cases that fall to the clergy subordinated to him.’⁸⁵

No less than this, the superintendent had to be concerned about the liturgical order of *Edinoverie* churches. This was an unsuitable task for an Orthodox priest who did not understand the pre-Nikonian rituals. Ritual however was only the surface of the problem: ‘we are distinguished from other Orthodox not by rituals alone. The *edinovertsy* are distinguished by their understanding of the matter of salvation.’⁸⁶ This, it must be stressed, was not a different theological conception of salvation or the means to achieve it. Shleev meant that the Orthodox, by failing to relate strictly to ritual matters and fasting, lacked discipline in their religious lives: the *edinovertsy* by contrast realised the ‘educational significance’ of proper ritual observance in fostering real concern for the matter of salvation. A *Edinoverie* priest thus had to be elected to the position of superintendent because an Orthodox equivalent could not understand the *value* of the old rites properly. He did not understand, as Shleev expressed it elsewhere, that ‘for the *edinovertsy*, observation of the rituals and ritualistic formalities is closely connected with conscience, it is a necessary condition for spiritual peace.’⁸⁷ It is comments such as this that made many of the missionaries doubt whether Shleev had truly come to a correct apprehension of the matter of ritual. In this statement, there is certainly little sign of the disconnect between internal state and external action that necessarily accompanied the ritual re-evaluation. Such, of course, was the part of Platon’s paradox. *Edinoverie* was predicated on both lessening the import of rite whilst also creating institutions especially to protect ritual. By excluding Orthodox clerics from the position of *Edinoverie* superintendent, Shleev was extolling the second half of the paradox over the former but,

⁸⁴ S. Shleev, “Blagochinnye edinovercheskikh tserkvei,” *Pravda pravoslaviia*, no. 10–11 (1908): 2. Shleev’s use of the term “priestly elders” harks back to the ancient tradition of elected clerical overseers that the superintendents ultimately replaced in the late eighteenth century. See G. L. Freeze, *The Russian Levites: Parish Clergy in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), 50–51.

⁸⁵ Shleev, “Blagochinnye,” 2.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁸⁷ RGIA f. 796, op. 190 VI otd., 3 St., d.15, l. 115.

in doing so, opened himself up to charges that his understanding of ritual matters was more ‘fanatical’ and schismatic than Orthodox.

Superintendents also marked a fundamental stage in the centralisation and unification of *Edinoverie*: ‘superintendent congresses are the first step in the matter of unifying and animating *Edinoverie*. By convening them, the *edinovertsy* think not about stopping at them but going further.’⁸⁸ Gaining good *Edinoverie* superintendents who were fully aware of their role as ‘spiritual guides’ was thus part of a wider chain of events that would first lead to superintendent gatherings and then to diocesan congresses.

Even as Shleev wrote this, the Viatka congress was close to realising his aims. They undertook a measure that would guarantee that only *Edinoverie* priests would occupy the superintendency position. On 11 June 1908, they tabled and passed a resolution that every three years the *Edinoverie* clergy of the diocese would gather and elect superintendents. These gatherings would also sit side by side with diocesan congresses to ‘exchange opinions and thoughts on service and missionary business.’⁸⁹ Unlike so many of the changes proposed between 1905 and 1912, the plans did not just remain on paper. Viatka did not have *Edinoverie* superintendents and so the congress and the bishop used the opportunity to create two districts and appoint *Edinoverie* clergymen to the positions.⁹⁰

All in all, the issue of superintendents did not prove to be especially controversial, largely because the issue was portrayed as a matter of fulfilling the law of 1845 rather than any radical change. The 1908 Kiev Missionary Congress came to much the same conclusion as the one in Viatka. Their resolution relating to the matter argued that the bishop would retain power of appointment but the *Edinoverie* clergy could choose three possible candidates for selection. They also recognised the need for superintendent congresses and entrusted the *Edinoverie* superintendents with full power over ritual matters in the churches under their supervision.⁹¹ Nevertheless, the lack of controversy should not deceive us as to Shleev’s intent. It is clear from his statements that the superintendents were to play a crucial role in defending *Edinoverie*’s ritual compact and forming a centralised administrative structure. This was an instance where an older policy of

⁸⁸ S. Shleev, “Edinovercheskie blagochinnicheskie s’ezdy,” *Pravda pravoslaviia*, no. 14–15 (1908): 4.

⁸⁹ “Viatskii edinovercheskii s’ezd,” no. 43, 1119. However, the bishop of Viatka would remain thoroughly in control of the process since he would confirm the elections and could remove a superintendant at any time.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 44, 1160–1161.

⁹¹ “O zaniatiiakh IV-go vserossiiskogo missionerskogo s’ezda v gor. Kieve,” *Pribavleniia k tserkovnym vedomostiam*, no. 33 (1908): 1570, 1575.

institutionalising ritual difference could be made part of a more expansive project of administrative confessionalisation.

The Council of Congresses

In January 1912, the full scale of Shleev's administrative scheme was unveiled. The first National *Edinoverie* Congress in St. Petersburg ratified a plan that brought together all of the disparate elements into a concrete and comprehensive administrative structure that would extend the power of the leaders of *Edinoverie* all the way down to diocesan level. A central body was established known as the Council of the All Russian Congresses of Orthodox Old Believers. The Council would be made up of thirty members, 15 lay and 15 clerical, and would be headed by a bishop who would 'serve by the Old Believer rite.' This body would meet no less than three times a year in St. Petersburg and they would possess control over three different funds dedicated to education, religious needs, and mutual aid. The remit of these congresses was very wide indeed. They would

co-ordinate the unification of all Old Believer concords into one 'church body,' ascertain the religious moral, educational and economic needs of Orthodox Old Belief and realise improvements and corrections in church parish life. In particular, the congress will discuss business relating to the general position of Old Believers in the state and defend their religious, church and national cultural (*bytovoe*) interests: it will build churches, schools of different types, courses, libraries, typographies, publish journals and books, and take measures to raise the splendour of churches: it will coordinate the opening and development of charity for Christian brotherly mutual aid, for which it will establish almshouses, hospital, orphanages, nurseries for children, workers' houses, all possible associations and treasuries in cases of illness, death, and for the aid of the needy.⁹²

Upon reaching resolutions, the Council of Congresses would pass the proposals up to the Synod in order to be confirmed into law. Shleev, in his introductory remarks about this new structure, made it transparent that the new Council was 'a *Edinoverie* commission under the Holy Synod headed by a bishop who is one of the members of the Holy Synod.'⁹³

This was mirrored at a diocesan level. Congresses there would elect their own local councils who would then take from the consistory all business relating to *Edinoverie*

⁹² *Pervyi Vserossiiskii s'ezd*, 144.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 3–4.

parishes. These councils would sit under the supervision of local bishops and would be made up of a mix of clergy and laymen.⁹⁴ Finally a new parish regulation was formulated. The most significant point of the new regulations was that they codified the electoral principle.⁹⁵

The significance of the new administrative order is not difficult to see. The national Council and the diocesan councils would take over virtually all business connected with *Edinoverie* and ensure a regular series of congresses to propose measures to both local diocesan prelates and to the Holy Synod. *Edinoverie* as a whole would undergo an unprecedented degree of centralisation. No longer would individual parishes be largely cut off from each other but would now be connected to diocesan and national administrative bodies. The consistories were firmly cut out of the picture: for all intents and purposes, the *edinovertsy* would be administratively separate from the believers of the Russian Orthodox Church. The Council of Congresses possessed the ear of the Synod through its chair and thereby could propose legislation. Such granted it a degree of authority over the diocesan congresses. The only points where any connection still remained were with the diocesan prelates and the Synod, both of whom retained the ability to impress their will on *Edinoverie* both at the national and provincial level. The system was thus carefully crafted to maintain the canonical subordination of the *edinovertsy* to Orthodox bishops whilst at the same time providing a mechanism for ritual standardisation and the defence of *Edinoverie* traditions should any local prelate choose to threaten them. It did therefore make some concessions to those who argued against divorcing the *edinovertsy* from the diocesan hierarchs but also gave firm shape to a centralised *Edinoverie*.

The missionaries, quite correctly, understood that the proposed order existed to give institutional shape to ritual difference and to form a confessional grouping that was in most ways separate from the Orthodox faithful. They were no doubt gratified to learn that none of the proposals from the 1912 congress were confirmed. The Council of Congresses' one and only act was to organise the 1912 assembly. It was not given a more official existence until 1917.

Shleev found himself hoisted on his petard by the terms of the parish regulations. As we have seen, he was democratically minded when it came to parish management, arguing

⁹⁴ Ibid., 143.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 144–147.

consistently for the election of parish priests and for the parish council to be given an expanded role in the life of the local church. As he argued to Metropolitan Flavian of Kiev in an undated letter, ‘social parish life, in the understanding of the *edinovertsy*, is the most essential nerve of the Church organism, [it is] the glory of the Church and its saints.’⁹⁶ However, he always believed that the clergy themselves should possess an equal role: as rule two of the proposed parish regulations bluntly put it, ‘the parish consists of clergy and laymen.’⁹⁷ The new regulations thus sought to give the clergy an expanded role, particularly in economic matters. This infuriated many of the lay leaders of the four Petersburg parishes who petitioned the Synod to ignore this part of the regulations. They condemned the change as an ‘innovation.’ Previously the priests had acted as ‘performers of the liturgy and teachers in faith’ but had never been allowed to interfere in economic matters.⁹⁸ Ironically, this most fervent enemy of innovation in *Edinoverie* parishes found himself accused of the same crime that he had charged Orthodox priests and bishops with.⁹⁹

The Clergy and Education

Paradoxically, the lack of education among the *Edinoverie* clergy was perceived as both a strength and a weakness. It was a strength because it meant that the priests and their subordinates would be more closely linked to the concerns of the people. Shleev himself wrote in his article on superintendents, the ‘knack to be a true superintendent is not given by study in the seminary, not by a systematic education, but by practice and living according to those high spiritual interests’ which the flock so treasured.¹⁰⁰ However, it was a weakness because the *Edinoverie* clergy could hardly be the equal of Orthodox or schismatic counterparts without a more thorough education. Schools were necessary, Shleev wrote, ‘in order to raise *Edinoverie*, to make it equal in standing to Orthodoxy, in order to defend the old rituals’ and to give the *edinovertsy* ‘a conscious understanding of the very essence of *Edinoverie*.’¹⁰¹ The answer to the paradox was to provide the clergy with a form of schooling that sought to inculcate the piety and religious discipline that

⁹⁶ RGIA, f. 796, op. 190 VI otd., 3 st., d.15, l. 111

⁹⁷ *Pervyi Vserossiiskii s'ezd*, 144.

⁹⁸ RGIA, f. 796, op. 193, d. 1959, l. 53-54.

⁹⁹ As with so many other matters, this was not a problem that Shleev alone confronted. Orthodox parishioners in general were fiercely protective of their prerogatives in the parish’s economic matters, much to the chagrin of clergy and the Synod. See G. Young, “Into Church Matters: Lay Identity, Rural Parish Life, and Popular Politics in Late Imperial Russia,” *Russian History* 23, no. 1-4 (1996): 375-377.

¹⁰⁰ Shleev, “Blagochinnye,” 1-2.

¹⁰¹ Shleev, *Edinoverie v svoem vnutrennem razvitii*, 219.

was held to define *Edinoverie* and its mission. The question of schooling therefore intimately involved improving the quality of the clergy.

The kind of curricula used at *Edinoverie* schools could give rise to acerbic criticism from both priests and secular educators. The emphasis on Old Church Slavonic and rote learning seemed increasingly outdated and impractical.¹⁰² A small polemic broke out on this subject between A. Nikol'skii, a *Edinoverie* priest writing for *Missionerskoe obozrenie* and G. Goviadin, one of the contributors to Shleev's journal. Nikol'skii's main thrust was that the obsession of the *edinovertsy* with rote learning drove away well-educated teachers. Goviadin responded by revelling in the fact. Such learned men and women, he argued, behaved in a terrible way in church ('they do not make the customary bows and even do not mark themselves with the sign of the cross, they stand in a lordly fashion[...]hiding their hands in their coats and leaning their heads backwards') and thus discouraged parents from placing their children under their tuition.¹⁰³ In old times, 'the Russian people were righteous, clever, honourable, noble, polite, respectful, generous, compassionate, magnanimous and industrious.' Thanks to these scions of enlightenment, this was no longer the case.¹⁰⁴ Yet despite the lack of such educated individuals, the *edinovertsy* had no shortage of literate children capable of reading in church. He then briefly described the ideal *Edinoverie* curriculum: children should be 'taught arithmetic, literacy, the letters and other subjects but also church reading, singing, liturgy and in general the rituals and customs beloved by them.'¹⁰⁵

Goviadin's article amounts to a rejection of the secular, educated world and an exaltation of the values of the Russian *narod*. The *edinovertsy*, as the part of the Church least tainted by association with secular society, were thus the best part of the people, made so by the pristine state of their rituals and church discipline. Dribintsev furthered these themes. The church parish schools were all staffed by 'seminarians, female graduates from diocesan schools (*eparkhialki*), and people who are similarly completely alien to the spirit of *Edinoverie*.'¹⁰⁶ When teaching the alphabet, they committed the grievous sin of trying to make it a 'fun experience': rather than illustrate the letters with 'holy words,' they used the names of animals instead. Thus 'from childhood the school develops in the pupils a

¹⁰² See my discussion on the Bol'shoe Murashkino school in chapter V.

¹⁰³ G. Goviadin, "Vzgliad edinovertsa na svoi shkoly," *Pravda pravoslaviia*, no. 10 (1906): 9–10.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 11.

¹⁰⁶ G. Dribintsev, "Tserkovnaia shkola v edinovercheskom prikhode," *Pravda pravoslaviia* no. 22–23 (1908): 1.

love of the world but not of heaven: [this kind of education] strives chiefly to raise the mind but not the soul and the heart of the child.’¹⁰⁷ Such threatened the piety of the children, future parishioners, and thus posed an existential threat to *Edinoverie*.

Given the critique of seminarists and the diocesan schools, the question was how were the future *Edinoverie* clergy to be educated? Shleev furnished a practical answer. In 1908, he opened a middle school (*real’noe uchilishche*) in St. Petersburg. He did not hide his intent: ‘the school opened in St. Petersburg can be turned into a seminary for the clergy, only without those defects which abound in church schools and seminaries.’¹⁰⁸ Such an unofficial seminary was necessary because of what the regular seminaries did to *Edinoverie* children. When they attended, they lost their piety and thus avoided *Edinoverie* parishes. *Edinoverie* was deprived of its most educated sons and so was unable to defend itself from ‘external enemies’ who accused it of ‘worship of the letter alone, of ritual literalism.’¹⁰⁹ So it was that the new school would focus on the ‘Orthodox understanding of Christianity and instil respect for churchliness (*tserkovnost’*), discipline and the canons of the Councils and the Holy Fathers,’ a matter it would achieve by teaching scriptural history and the ‘serious study of the liturgical regulations and singing.’¹¹⁰

Shleev’s scheme was popular enough to provoke imitations. In the 1909 Moscow *Edinoverie* congress, the delegates thanked Father Simeon for his vision in the matter of education and passed a resolution to petition Metropolitan Vladimir about a singing school under the Troitskaia church.¹¹¹ They did so two years later. Whilst their letter to the Metropolitan focussed heavily on the need to train capable singers, their regulations suggest a much wider intent.¹¹² Throughout the three year course, they would teach canon law, singing by the hooks, Old Church Slavonic, Russian, general church history, geography, scriptural geography and archaeology, Russian history both church and civil, didactics, hygiene, arithmetic, hand writing and draftmanship.¹¹³ All in all, there would be seventeen subjects. Hook singing and Russian grammar had the most time dedicated to

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ S. Shleev, “K otkrytiiu pravoslavno-starobriadcheskogo real’nogo uchilishcha v g. S.-Peterburge,” *Pravda pravoslaviia*, no. 40–41 (1907): 3.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 2.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 3.

¹¹¹ *Trudy Moskovskogo edinovercheskogo s’ezda* (Moscow, 1910), 31.

¹¹² RGIA, f. 796, op. 197, VI ot. 3 st., d. 111, l. 1

¹¹³ Ibid., l. 2.

them. The average age of the pupils was to be 13 to 17, suggesting the fact that this school was intended as an unofficial seminary.

Had similar schemes been implemented empire wide, the practice of sending the sons of *Edinoverie* clergy to church seminaries would have been dwindled or perhaps ceased altogether. One of the few ways by which the *edinovertsy* and the Orthodox priesthods were being brought together would have come to an end. The cultural gap between the two clergies would have expanded considerably. In 1915, the Synod made sure this would be the case by demanding an alteration to the regulations of the Moscow school in order prevent Orthodox children from subscribing.¹¹⁴ Not only was this a surprising revival of the confessional boundaries that had caused such controversy in Nizhnii Novgorod but it also meant that *Edinoverie* pupils would have less interaction with the Orthodox as they grew up into the next generation of priests and psalmists.

Inventing the Confession

The creation of a confession relies on fostering a sense of difference in comparison to other religious groups and the forging of various means to embody that difference. However, the cultural element in forging confessions has sometimes been overlooked. R. Po-Chia Hsia has noted that ‘confessionalization in early modern Germany was more than a process of “social disciplining,” that molded burghers and peasants into obedient subjects, it also represented a cultural process of acculturation, one that reinforced the differences between the many Germanies.’¹¹⁵ With the slackening of censorship after 1905, Shleev and his backers made use of print media to firstly assert the distinctive character of *Edinoverie* and secondly to forge the sense of a wider national community of *edinovertsy*.

His first opportunity to disseminate his message widely came with the establishment of his journal, *Pravda pravoslaviia*, in the second half of 1906. This organ was originally intended to cover more than *Edinoverie*. Its slogan (‘for a free press and a free Church’) painted the editors’ radical sympathies on the wall for all to see. The articles of the first few issues eradicated any possible doubt, assailing both Church hierarchs and the Synodal order. Even Antonii (Khrapovitskii), Shleev’s mentor and most important supporter, was

¹¹⁴ The reason cited was that having Orthodox pupils clashed ‘with the special aim of the school – to prepare singers and teachers especially for *Edinoverie* churches and schools.’ Ibid., I. 15ob. – 16.

¹¹⁵ R. Po-Chia Hsia, *Social Discipline in the Reformation: Central Europe 1550-1750* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), 89.

attacked in an article about religious toleration.¹¹⁶ The Synod was quick to respond and demanded the removal of the slogan. After some prevarication, Shleev complied and from that point on the journal stuck entirely to printing pieces about *Edinoverie*.¹¹⁷

We have already seen one way in which the paper contributed to confessionalisation. The printing of Old Church Slavonic prayers in the appendix and the descriptions of services in Shleev's church were meant to aid the process of ritual standardisation whilst the articles themselves laid down the key elements of his episcopal, administrative and educational reform programmes. Articles might also focus on the history and present standing of individual *Edinoverie* parishes or larger communities scattered throughout the Empire, such as reporting the completion of a new church in Chernigov diocese in 1907.¹¹⁸ Equally, the printing of letters from correspondents and readers helped give the sense of a wider community. Some letters distributed news from other parts of the empire.¹¹⁹ For instance, a message from Nizhnii Novgorod relayed the rumour that the Kerzhenskii *Edinoverie* convent was to be turned into an Orthodox community.¹²⁰ Others implored fellow *edinovertsy* for aid. Two priests sent a letter begging for donations to their impoverished and starving parish in Samara.¹²¹ Another cleric asked for assistance in constructing a school for an Arkhangel'sk church where local Old Belief had become particularly strong following the Edict of Toleration.¹²²

Thus, *Pravda pravoslaviia* not only created the idea of a *Edinoverie* beyond the confines of local parishes and dioceses but also helped establish informal networks of aid that would give substance to the 'imagined community' of the *Edinoverie* confession.¹²³ Had the journal lasted longer, it could have helped forge a sense of solidarity, the idea of an expansive religious group with common interests regardless of location. Certainly, this could do no harm to Shleev's demand for the centralisation of *Edinoverie* under a

¹¹⁶ M. Chel'tsov, "O veroterpimosti. (Po povodu statei L. N. Tolstogo i arkhiepiskopa Volynskogo Antoniiia)," *Pravda pravoslaviia*, no. 2 (September 8, 1906): 9–10.

¹¹⁷ Shleev initially tried to keep the slogan and changed the name of the journal to *Glagol vremeni* (*Word of the Times*) but evidently to no avail. N. P. Zimina, *Put' na Golgofu* (Moscow, 2005), 107.

¹¹⁸ I. Cherednikov, "Klimovskaia kazanskaia edinovercheskaia tserkov'," *Pravda pravoslaviia*, no. 8 (1907): 11–14.

¹¹⁹ Thanks must be given to Octavie Bellavance for this insight. For the role of letters to the editor in creating the sense of a wider educated society, see her forthcoming thesis.

¹²⁰ "Pis'ma k redaktsiiu," *Pravda pravoslaviia*, no. 10 (1906): 15.

¹²¹ "Vozzvanie," *Pravda pravoslaviia*, no. 10 (1906): 16.

¹²² L. Zavarin, "Golos edinoveritsev-kargopol'tsev," *Pravda pravoslaviia*, no. 7 (1906): 15–16.

¹²³ A mutual aid fund for all the *Edinoverie* parishes of the empire was another project floated in the pages of *Pravda pravoslaviia*. See G. Dribintsev, "Fond dlia vsepomoshchestvovaniia bedneishim edinovercheskim tserkvam Rossiiskoi imperii," *Pravda pravoslaviia*, no. 24–25 (1908): 7–9.

Synodal bishop. Equally, this was the only *Edinoverie* journal to be published, a fact that further privileged Shleev's narrative.

The journal was closed in 1908 for reasons that remain a mystery. This might have been part of the Synod's crackdown on the Union for Church Regeneration that took place in the same year or perhaps the authorities were weary of the constant polemics with the missionaries. No doubt the Synod was also less than impressed by the fact *Pravda pravoslaviia* occasionally carried adverts for Old Believer journals and newspapers.¹²⁴

So Shleev turned to historiography. This provided him with the opportunity to forge a historical narrative that would legitimate his vision for *Edinoverie* as the end product of a natural process. Orthodox theologians had done precisely this throughout the course of the nineteenth century when they sought to demonstrate that ritual tolerance was a fundamental part of Orthodox Church history. By finding instances of such tolerance in the past, the Church had turned the ritual re-evaluation into a key point of their identity, thus forging a way to distinguish Orthodoxy from the schism. Shleev too had to write a historical narrative to justify separatist confessionalisation. He had begun writing such a history when he was a student in Kazan' and continued to research over the next decade, periodically publishing segments in his journal. In 1910, he published his history of *Edinoverie*, covering its story from 1657 to 1909.¹²⁵

The argument that Shleev wanted to investigate was why *Edinoverie* had enjoyed so little success. Why had it not ended the Old Believer schism, as had originally been intended? Shleev answered that the root of the problem was a failure to truly understand *Edinoverie* by both the Orthodox and the *edinovertsy*. The former understood *Edinoverie* as 'constant striving to ritual uniformity' while the ignorance of the latter was largely down to the 'insincerity of the church authorities in the matter of conditional unification of the Old Believers with the Church.'¹²⁶ This mutual incomprehension, rooted in Platon's rules, had to be resolved. The Orthodox Church had to fully affirm its unity with *Edinoverie* and establish that the old rituals were equal in honour and value to the Nikonian ones. Of course, Shleev's conception of unity was very different to that had by most Russian Orthodox churchmen. This was unity on Shleev's own terms and those terms were the

¹²⁴ See, for example, the advert for the Old Believer journal *Staroobriadets* that appeared in *Pravda pravoslaviia*, no. 16-17 (1907), 16.

¹²⁵ Shleev tried to use the book to obtain a master's degree in theology from the Moscow Ecclesiastical Academy in 1911 and the St. Petersburg Ecclesiastical Academy in 1913 but was refused by both institutions. Zimina, *Put' na Golgofu*, 150-152.

¹²⁶ Shleev, *Edinoverie*, 3.

assertion of doctrinal unity whilst vigilantly observing *Edinoverie*'s ritual compact and the privileges of its parish life. Part of that vigil meant necessarily enacting measures to protect the *edinovertsy* from any further encroachments: in other words, the ordination of a *Edinoverie* bishop. Shleev thus created a narrative of *Edinoverie* that had to end with its confessionalisation. Only with that step could it become the kind of weapon that the Church needed to fight the schism.

Did Shleev's plans have any influence beyond his narrow circle of supporters and associates? He frequently pointed out the success his scheme had in the various *Edinoverie* congresses and also made much of the fact that 120 parishes from 31 different dioceses had signed his 1905 petition to the Synod. However, there was some sign of ambivalence and uncertainty even in these petitions. One *Edinoverie* priest of a Tambov parish wrote under his signature, 'on the question about a *Edinoverie* bishop, we must say that this matter for us is entirely desirable but we have concerns. Our community is utterly small. We cannot maintain the church by our means. Our church only exists thanks to the visits of the Orthodox living in our village.'¹²⁷ Shleev's contest for the position of head priest of the Nikol'skaia parish also led to *edinovertsy* in the opposite camp to denounce his reform plan. In 1906, 52 Petersburg parishioners described Shleev and his plans in acidic terms:

Such people are not *edinovertsy* but *raznovertsy*, they want to divide from their mother, the Orthodox Church, to isolate themselves, to make a schism. It goes without saying that a group of such people led by a bishop will attempt to limit themselves from outside influence and create lines between the Orthodox which they will vigilantly guard so that no-one will convert to there [Orthodoxy] or vice versa. This cliquishness will lead willy-nilly to division and, with the course of time, to schism and ruin.¹²⁸

In 1917, three *Edinoverie* priests came to three opposite conclusions about the scheme. One agreed entirely with it, another stated he was perfectly satisfied with the present order while the third declared that Shleev was nothing other than the successor of Ioann Verkhovskii.¹²⁹ A group of Ekaterinburg *edinovertsy* also declared against the proposal, complaining they had not been properly represented at Shleev's second National *Edinoverie* Congress in July 1917.¹³⁰ Even after Shleev had been made a bishop in 1918,

¹²⁷ RGIA f. 796, op. 190 VI otd., 3 St., d.15, l. 68.

¹²⁸ Ibid., l. 134

¹²⁹ GARF, f. R-3431, op. 1, d. 365, ll. 87-89.

¹³⁰ Ibid., l.22.

the Moscow *Edinoverie* priest Stefan Smirnov responded to the call for more prelates by declaring that the ‘*Edinoverie* clergy do not desire a *Edinoverie* bishop.’¹³¹ There seems to have been enduring ambivalence or outright opposition to Shleev’s scheme, based on a fear that would perpetuate disunity in the Church.

Perhaps the most damning proof that separatist confessionalisation had very little appeal is the echoing silence in *Edinoverie* petitions of the period. In all of those I have seen, none choose to define *Edinoverie* in the terms that Shleev had set down. Whilst he was able to call on the support of communities in Kazan’ and Ufa in 1917, they stipulated their backing in concrete terms: they wanted the anathemas repealed and dioceses established.¹³² There was no mention of *Edinoverie* being the repository of ancient Russian piety or the need to centralise and create a standardised liturgy. Therefore the spread of Shleev’s plan seems to have been limited but this is to be expected. Confessionalisation is a process that takes place over centuries, not twelve years.

Conclusion

For all the sound and fury emitted by Shleev and his detractors between 1905 and 1912, very few of the reforms proposed were passed into law. The Synod proved relatively amenable to some of the ideas, especially when some consensus could be built around them and the terms in which they were proposed were moderate. They were absolutely aware of how the Edict of Religious Toleration now presented a deep challenge to *Edinoverie*’s existence and utility and were relatively welcoming of measures that might serve to reinvigorate the phenomenon. However, they felt they could not act without a Church Council, something they were expecting in the near future. Equally, the Synod had good reason to be suspicious of Shleev’s ideas given that they diverged significantly from the Synod’s own conception of *Edinoverie* that had been formulated in the 1880s. Nor would his links to the Union for Church Regeneration have helped his case. The reaction of the official Church should be understood not as acceptance of Shleev’s idea but rather a careful attempt to adapt certain elements that could be used for the purposes of confessional integration.

There can be little doubt that the plans he set forward had as their aim the confessionalisation of *Edinoverie*. His opponents certainly recognised it as such, although

¹³¹ S. Smirnov, *Zapiski sel'skogo sviashchennika. Dnevnikovye zapisi sviashchennosluzhitelia edinovercheskogo khrama arkhangela Mikhaila sela Mikhailovskaia Sloboda protoiereia Stefana Smirnova, napisannye im samim s 1905 po 1933 God.*, ed. E. Sarancha (Moscow, 2008), 121.

¹³² GARF, f. R-3431, op. 1, d. 367, ll.46-50.

they ignored the fact that Shleev had no intention of breaking the doctrinal subordination of *Edinoverie* to the governing body of the Church. The idea at the basis of the confessionalisation plan was that *Edinoverie* had something of value to bestow on the Orthodox Church. It had a popular Russian piety that had been preserved from the western influence to which the Church had succumbed. The vehicles of that piety were the pre-Nikonian rituals and the relatively democratic privileges that the *edinovertsy* possessed in parish management. The Orthodox Church needed *Edinoverie* for the revival of its religious life. Campaigns of liturgical fusion would lead to a decline in *Edinoverie* and therefore would deny the Church the opportunity to restore pious zeal for heavenly matters. As such, the privileges and distinctions of the *edinovertsy* had to be protected via a series of institutions.

This was not all. Shleev and his supporters believed that the best way to protect the *edinovertsy* was through centralisation. The creation of a bishop or commission under the Synod would serve to bring all the *edinovertsy* together into one flock, transforming *Edinoverie* from a dispersed collection of individual parishes located under the domain of different diocesan prelates into a single movement. Shleev aided in forging such a community through his journalism and academic work and sought to legitimise his vision as the natural outcome of *Edinoverie*'s development. This centralisation was the best way to defend the *edinovertsy* from local bishops who might undermine them and enact a policy of liturgical fusion. Standardisation was required to remove those elements that had snuck into the *Edinoverie* liturgy under pressure from Orthodox clergyman and church bureaucrats. To aid this process, more institutions were required. Specific schools, for instance, would be necessary to ensure that the *Edinoverie* clergy could perform the monophonic chants correctly and respect the old liturgical regulations.

Had this scheme of institutionalisation, centralisation, and standardisation been realised in its totality and given time to flourish, there can be little doubt that a *Edinoverie* confession would have emerged. It attempted to sever almost all connections between the Orthodox clergy and the *edinovertsy*. The only formal point of interaction would have been with the Synod or whatever institution replaced it. The schools, intended as *Edinoverie* seminaries, could have ended interaction between generations of clergy, adding to the gulf between the two priesthoods already caused by the electoral principle. The superintendent reform sought to prevent Orthodox clergymen from being appointed to this position. The *Edinoverie* bishop in Petersburg would have undermined the authority of local prelates to deal with the *edinovertsy* in their dioceses. What might have

emerged would have been a Russian Orthodox Church containing two confessions, one Old Believer and one Orthodox, which were connected only through the Church's highest governing body.

However, the separatist confessionalisation project would have always been hampered by the religious conservatism of the people Shleev intended to mould into a single denomination. Ritual standardisation was difficult to enact because there was no way of truly identifying what was part of the old ritual compact. Certainly a liturgical phrase might appear in the one of the old books but what if a second text contradicted it? Which was more legitimately 'old' and thereby more authentic? Any attempt to create a uniform liturgy in *Edinoverie* would confront the fact that others could oppose it on the basis of the same texts from which it was formed. Local communities, practicing a form of liturgy bestowed on them from generations of ancestors, would have grounds other than 'tradition' to legitimately oppose any change to their ritual usage.

What is the place of this confessionalisation plan within the grander scale of *Edinoverie* history? The institutionalisation of ritual was not new. It was in fact part of the 1800 settlement and formed one half of a notable contradiction. Platon emphasised the desire for ritual uniformity but at the same time conceded institutions and administrative mechanisms that would serve to preserve ritual distinction. Shleev wanted to end the contradiction by completely eradicating the ideal of uniformity in rite whilst completing the process of enforcing ritual distinction. This resolution would have ended the ill-defined position of *Edinoverie* between Orthodoxy and the schism by carving out a confession within the Church. That this project ever came about is a sign that the confessional integration launched by Subbotin and then the Synod came too late: the impact of the rules of Platon on the lived religious experience of *edinovertsy* had resulted in a firm conception of difference between Orthodoxy and *Edinoverie*. Shleev and his plans were the fruit born by Platon's confessional frontiers.

VIII: Scenarios of Unity: The Ceremonial Enactment of *Edinoverie*, 1900-1913

Introduction

Throughout the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, some had recognised that one of the best methods to bring Orthodoxy and *Edinoverie* together was through ceremony, a visual display of standing shoulder to shoulder in the bosom of the Holy Mother Church. Bishop Nikephoros (Theotokos) had the first ever *Edinoverie* church opened with two choirs singing, one Orthodox and one Old Believer, in their two distinctive styles. Later commentators described the ceremony as being ‘in the spirit of true *Edinoverie*.’¹³³ Emperor Paul’s visit to the Milovskaia church and the invitation he proffered to its parishoners to attend his court chapel were a symbol that the new arrangement between the Church and the schismatics not only had his support but also his active encouragement. The same can be said of Nicholas I’s presence at the opening of a church in Starodub’. In 1869, Pavel Prusskii, finding it ‘strange and baseless’ that *Edinoverie* and Orthodox clergy did not co-officiate regularly, organised for the priests of the *Edinoverie* churches of Moscow to hold a liturgy with their Orthodox colleagues at the Trinity Sergius Lavra, one of the holiest sites in all Russia.¹³⁴ Their presence in the monastery complex founded by St. Sergii of Radonezh linked them back to medieval Rus’ when both Orthodox and *edinovertsy* had composed a single flock of the Church, a time before the schism had sundered them in twain.

However, these were rare and isolated instances, decades apart and confined to localities. For the most part, parishioners and priests of both groups remained mutually disdainful of the rituals of the other. The Orthodox might consent to the presence of the *edinovertsy* if they crossed themselves with three fingers and the *edinovertsy* might permit the Orthodox if they were willing to process around the church in the direction of the sun. However, the re-evaluation of ritual was yet to seep into the provinces. Examples of mutual services are few and far between. Even though many bishops took an active role in spreading

¹³³ “Kem i kak polozheno nachalo edinoveriiu v Russkoi tserkvi,” *Bratskoe slovo*, no. 2 (1892): 114.

¹³⁴ N. Subbotin, *Pervye dvenadtsat’ let sluzheniia tservki bor’bu s raskolom (perepiska s arkhim. Pavlom za 1867-1879 gg.)* (Moscow, 1901), 49. Subbotin gives the impression that this was supposed to be a regular occurrence but I have only found one documented occasion where it did occur: on 5 June 1869, Pavel held a requiem for both Filaret (Drozdov) and Platon (Levshin) at the monastery. See V., “‘Ispoved’ staroobriadtsa Rogozhskogo kladbishcha. Neskol’ko slov po povodu ‘ispovedi staroobriadtsa popovskogo soglasiia,’” *Moskovskie eparkhial’nye vedomosti*, no. 1 (1870): 4.

Edinoverie in their dioceses, they usually did not take the opportunity to officiate in the churches they founded or among the people they converted.¹³⁵

All this began to change in 1881 when the Synod made changes to the rules of Platon. Quashing the eleventh rule forbidding Orthodox to turn to *Edinoverie* priests made truly joint ceremonies a possibility and opened the floodgates to episcopal liturgies in *Edinoverie* churches. By 1912, the prelates of Kazan', Perm', Samara, Saratov, Nizhnii Novgorod, Moscow, Kursk, Zhitomir, Mogilev, Petrozavodsk and Arkhangel'sk had not only performed liturgies to mixed crowd of believers but also had used the old rituals themselves.¹³⁶ Spurred on by the Edict of Toleration and Shleev's acerbic criticisms, the Synod and its prelates undertook a campaign to affirm unity of faith through ceremony.

The purpose of this chapter is to analyse these ceremonies in depth, making use of the detailed descriptions that circulated throughout the ecclesiastic press. Numerous events furnished the background for these ceremonies. The centenary of *Edinoverie*'s creation, the various *Edinoverie* congresses, the re-canonisation of St. Anna of Kashin, and the visit of Gregory IV, Patriarch of Antioch, all presented opportunities for the Church to symbolically broadcast the message of confessional integration. However, it should not be imagined that these ceremonies limited themselves to propagating a vision of Orthodoxy and *Edinoverie* united. This was the era when the relationship between Church and state was being called into question, even from within the Church itself. *Edinoverie*, founded by Paul and Platon working together, proffered an example of Church and state harmoniously co-operating for the betterment of both. The ceremonies frequently tried to reinforce the links between Nicholas II's flagging regime and Synodal Orthodoxy.

In terms of confessionalisation, the series of ceremonies held after 1900 were the symbolic highpoint of the effort to turn *edinovertsy* into Orthodox believers, to emphasise that *Edinoverie* was indivisibly part of the Orthodox confession. The episcopal services also marked the extent to which the re-evaluation of ritual, that central tenet of confessional integration, had been accepted. Such liturgies demonstrated that the episcopate of the Church, in practice as well as in theory, saw nothing wrong or 'sinful' in the old rituals and that they were equal to the corrected rites.

¹³⁵ Some examples of bishops blessing the churches they founded before the 1890s are Arkadii of Perm' in the 1840s, Afansii of Tomsk in 1845 and Grigorii of Penza in 1876. See, respectively, F. Loginovskikh, "Stoletie edinoveriia v g. Permi," *Permskie eparkhial'nye vedomosti*, no. 23 (1900): 456; D. N. Belikov, *Tomskii raskol: (istoricheskii ocherk s 1834 po 1880-ie gody)* (Tomsk, 1901), 190; "Beseda po rukopolozhenii v iereiia," *Penzenskie eparkhial'nye vedomosti*, no. 4 (1879): 9.

¹³⁶ *Pervyi Vserossiiskii s''ezd pravoslavnykh staroobriadtssev (edinovertsev)* (St. Petersburg, 1912), 69.

So far in the thesis I have mainly focussed on ritual and ceremony as purely religious phenomena, as the liturgical manifestations of authority and identity. However, as has long been observed by historians and anthropologists, ritual has a wider meaning. As Peter Burke has observed, it is difficult to agree with the Weberian thesis about the disenchantment of the world if we apply a wider meaning to ritual that can encapsulate secular or areligious ceremonies produced by states, societies and individuals.¹³⁷ Seen through such a lens, ritual and its importance has not declined in the modern world. Ritual still plays a key part in constructing narratives that serve to broadcast certain meanings whilst excluding others: no less, such rituals, if performed successfully, can help to foster social cohesion within various levels of the community. Scholars in various fields have deployed semiotic analysis of these narratives in order to deconstruct the visual narratives that they seek to portray and examine points of disjuncture where meanings counter to the intended message are able to slip in and disrupt displays of power or the forging of community.¹³⁸

Late imperial Russia was certainly not a disenchanted society. Rituals, both religious and secular, continued to be deployed in a range of contexts. Richard Wortman has examined the ceremonies and rituals of the Romanov monarchy over the course of two centuries to see how coronations, funerals and other political events enshrined messages of imperial authority and shifts in the direction of policy.¹³⁹ Orlando Figes and Boris Kolonitskii have shown how ritual and ceremony became a battleground during the Russian Revolution.¹⁴⁰ Most pertinently for our case, Gregory Freeze has shown how Nicholas II attempted to ‘resacralize’ the Russian monarchy through a series of politically motivated canonisations: ‘potentially, at least, the canonizations promised to renew the spiritual aura and political legitimacy of autocracy, thereby inducing a restive population to acquiesce to its failures in domestic and foreign policy.’¹⁴¹ John Strickland too has looked at the

¹³⁷ P. Burke, *The Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Italy. Essays on Perception and Communication* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 224–225.

¹³⁸ The literature on the social use of ceremonial ritual is simply vast and cannot possibly be listed in full here. For the main theoretical approaches, see A. Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, trans. M. B. Vizedom and G. L. Caffee (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960); V. Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969); C. Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973); C. Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

¹³⁹ R. Wortman, *Scenarios of Power: Myth and Ceremony in Russian Monarchy*, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995).

¹⁴⁰ O. Figes and B. Kolonitskii, *Interpreting the Russian Revolution. The Language and Symbols of 1917* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999).

¹⁴¹ G. L. Freeze, “Subversive Piety: Religion and the Political Crisis in Late Imperial Russia,” *Journal of Modern History* 68 (1996): 310.

Church's used its participation in the key anniversaries (like the celebration of the 900th anniversary of the baptism of Rus' in 1888) to spread an ideology of 'Orthodox clerical patriotism.'¹⁴²

However, both authors ultimately conclude that the ceremonies were all too thin a paper with which to paste over the cracks of deep social division, opposition to the existing form of Church-state relations and competing counter-narratives. Freeze notes of the canonisations that 'these events served less to resacralize autocracy than to desacralize the Church, not so much because of their unusual frequency as because of their poor staging and performance' whilst Strickland argues that the ceremonies could not eradicate the ideological inconsistencies within clerical Orthodox patriotism.¹⁴³ This chapter posits a similar argument. As visually impressive as the scenarios were, they could not succeed in persuading the *edinovertsy* or many churchmen of seamless confessional unity between *Edinoverie* and Orthodoxy. The Old Believers used their new freedom of the press to savage the ceremonies as shallow hypocrisy; secular journalists took advantage of the opportunity to attack the Synodal system of church governance; and many Orthodox participants in the celebrations used terms and phrases hardly appropriate for fostering mutual sympathy. The presence of two visions for the future of *Edinoverie*, one integrative and one separatist, led to public arguments as alternative interpretations that competed with the Synodal script. Shleev in particular was highly proficient at using the scenarios of unity to broadcast his own plan for *Edinoverie*'s confessionalisation. The ceremonial enactment of confessional integration could not wipe away the contradictions of Platon's *Edinoverie* nor could they make people forget a century's worth of experience of religious difference.

The Master Narrative

By the end of the nineteenth century, the Synod had largely adopted the definition of *Edinoverie* that was propagated by Pavel Prusskii and Professor Subbotin. This definition was based on asserting almost absolute unity between the *edinovertsy* and the Orthodox. The only difference between the two groups of believers should be their rituals and, to a lesser extent, the privileges the *edinovertsy* had in parish management. Such a definition, at least as Subbotin understood it, necessarily excluded the possibility of the *edinovertsy*

¹⁴² For the 1888 festivals, see J. Strickland, *The Making of Holy Russia: The Orthodox Church and Russian Nationalism Before the Revolution* (New York: Holy Trinity Publications, 2013), 3–26.

¹⁴³ Freeze, "Subversive Piety" 349; Strickland, *The Making of Holy Russia*, xxi.

having their own bishops since such would undermine unity on an administrative and canonical level.

The conclusive statement of this idea came on 27 October 1900 when the Synod published an address (*poslanie*) to the *edinovertsy* that was to be read out in every *Edinoverie* parish across the Empire in celebration of the centenary. This brief document was the master narrative that the Church was to try and encode in the scenarios of unity.

As the occasion behoved, the address delved into the past. A century ago, the ancestors of the *edinovertsy* had ‘become conscious of the falsity of their division from it [the Church] because of the correction of liturgical books and some rituals’ and thus, aware of the poverty of their position, had asked the Church to be allowed to join it whilst allowing them to keep the old rites. The Holy Synod had, with fatherly love, ‘accepted their request and gave them legitimate priests’ who were ‘in canonical dependence on the local bishops.’ Thus unity was achieved: the Old Believers entered into the body of Christ, the Church, and gained access to salvation through the grace of the sacraments. The letter ended by praying for those Old Believers still outside the Church: it was ‘prepared to accept them like a loving, merciful and forgiving mother’ should the Lord call them to its gates.¹⁴⁴

The creation of *Edinoverie* was portrayed as a joint effort. The Old Believers were not shown as the passive recipients of Church ‘indulgence’ but rather as conscious actors who had become aware of their problems by themselves and had resolved to act by turning to the Church. The Church too was an active partner, dispensing the requested measures when asked. The message to the modern *edinovertsy* was that unity in faith was not simply a matter of the Church accepting them. They had to be conscious of the need for union and to embrace the Church openly. Their ancestors were models to whom they should closely adhere. The epistle also made clear the practical terms of that union. It was constituted by the dispatch of legitimate priests to the Old Believers and the subordination of these clergymen to the local bishops, as the canons dictated. The Synod was drawing a line between what could be and what could not be permitted within the terms of union. *Edinoverie* hierarchs were evidently beyond the pale. Finally, the last paragraph clearly points to the continuing mission of *Edinoverie* among the Old Believers, casting its appeal in remarkably gentle language. It does not even refer to the Old Believers as

¹⁴⁴ RGIA, f. 796, op. 181, d. 2610, ll. 2-3.

schismatics (*raskol'niki*) but simply 'those still dwelling outside the salvatory walls of the holy Church.'¹⁴⁵

More notable is what the address does not say. Firstly, it completely glosses over the troubles the Church had had accepting *Edinoverie* over the course of the previous century. The historical narrative is framed to give the impression of an entirely smooth and functional unity in which neither party suffered from doubts or remorse. Given this, it perhaps not surprising that the Russian state, so instrumental in the founding of *Edinoverie*, is entirely absent. The Synod would have wanted to avoid all suggestions that they were compelled to create *Edinoverie* on behest of the state, particularly since such interpretations contained more than a kernel of truth. If this was their intent, they were not successful. A journalist for *Novoe vremia* argued shortly after the release of the letter that the *edinovertsy* had 'received their rights from the autocratic authorities, the Church only obeyed them [the state].'¹⁴⁶

Another omission that is worthy of note is the absence of the terms '*Edinoverie*' and '*edinovertsy*.' The Synod used the expression 'the flock of the Apostolic and Catholic Greco-Russian Orthodox Church who keep the so-called old rituals.' Again, the point of this was to emphasise unity. By calling the *edinovertsy* a flock of the Orthodox Church, the Synod was attempting to eradicate this problem and further reinforce their understanding of *Edinoverie* as being fully part of the Orthodox confession, distinguished only by the old rite. Avoiding the word '*Edinoverie*' was also designed to placate some individuals, like the author who commented that 'this name never was liked by the *edinovertsy* themselves and always served as a target for biting ridicule from the side of the schism.'¹⁴⁷ However, the term chosen by the Synod as a replacement was also sending a message to the *edinovertsy* that they would not accept the term 'Orthodox Old Belief,' a label disputed for both theological and confessional reasons. It was not successful. Both Skvortsov and Shleev believed that the carefully crafted Synodal wording legitimised the term Orthodox Old Belief.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., I. 3.

¹⁴⁶ V. Zhmakin, "Edinoverie v 1797-1799 godakh," *Pribavleniia k tserkovnym vedomostiam*, no. 146 (1900): 1867.

¹⁴⁷ V. M. Skvortsov, ed., *Iubileinoe torzhestvo pravoslavnogo staroobriadchestva (edinoveriia). (27 oktiabria 1900)* (St Petersburg, 1901), 15.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 25. It is notable that Skvortsov in 1900 evidently did not have the hostility to the term 'Orthodox Old Belief' that he was to show after 1905.

Also absent was any discussion of the Orthodox view on the old rituals. In both the 1881 Synodal amendment to the rules of Platon and the 1885 Kazan' Council's statement, the leaders of the Church had reiterated their understanding of the old rituals as containing some sinfulness and being less perfect than the corrected ones: the Synod was going one step further in order to minimise the importance of ritual difference and emphasise unity. However, it still insisted on using the term 'so called old rituals', thus maintaining the belief that the Nikonian rituals were older than those of the Old Believers, a contentious claim for many *edinovertsy*.¹⁴⁹

The master narrative set out by the Synodal address was designed to fully propagate a definition of unity in faith that was wholly rooted in Subbotin's conception, stressing a close and active union between the two that was based on a shared hierarchy and indulgence towards the old rituals. However, the letter was both a celebration of union and an admonition to the *edinovertsy* about the limits of that union. The cracks beneath the surface were fairly obvious as the ceremonies that attempted to embody this message made clear. On the surface, unity was stressed but there were underlying tensions, ready to be exploited by those who opposed the Synod's definition of true unity in faith or were hostile to Orthodoxy entirely.

A Century of Unity

In October 1900, cities across the Russian Empire celebrated the centenary of *Edinoverie*'s creation. All of the ceremonies made use of common strategies in order to deliver the message of confessional unity: a symbolic use of urban space, the divine drama of the liturgy, gift-giving, the invitation of senior figures both ecclesiastical and secular and speeches that clarified the encoded content of the performances. However, each was distinguished by a focus on the local aspect of the history of *Edinoverie*, incorporating famous sites and notable institutions into the proceedings. Some even highlighted the international and ecumenical dimensions of *Edinoverie*. Here we will use four examples to make our case: Moscow, St. Petersburg, Perm', and Kazan'.

The Capitals

In Moscow, the celebrations began on 22 October. A delegation of five *Edinoverie* priests organised a *panikhida* (requiem) for Metropolitan Platon at the Orthodox Spaso-Vifanskii

¹⁴⁹ The *edinovertsy* had campaigned for the Church to recognise that the two rites were at least equally old in the 1860s and 1870s but to no avail. Simon (Shleev), *Edinoverie v svoem vnutrennem razvitii* (Moscow, 2004), 203–204.

monastery in the Trinity Sergius Lavra. The singing was performed in the old style and was led by the *Edinoverie* clergymen. This was repeated the next day with the abbot and the brethren of the monastery in attendance. At the end of the proceedings, the *edinovertsy* gave the Orthodox monks some photographs of the monastery and a portrait of Metropolitan Platon. They then went to the relics of St. Sergii of Radonezh to hear an akathist.¹⁵⁰

This particular scenario of unity demonstrates a masterly use of space to conjure an image of Orthodox and *Edinoverie* unity spanning the course of the nineteenth century. The Spaso-Vifanskii monastery had been chosen carefully because it shared a spiritual father with the *edinovertsy*: Platon (Levshin) had founded the monastery in 1783.¹⁵¹ The requiem service and the gift of a portrait were not only reflections on the creation of *Edinoverie*. They also liturgically and visually reinforced the idea that the *Edinoverie* clergy and the Orthodox monks were united under the guidance of the same hierarch of the Russian Church whose wisdom and beneficence were responsible for the existence of both. The presence of the old singing style in the Orthodox monastery also demonstrated the legacy of Platon's indulgence to the old rituals, his initiation of the process whereby those rituals came to be seen as equally valid within the Orthodox Church. Of no less import was the worship at the relics of St. Sergii, Russia's 'national' saint.¹⁵² In performing an akathist here, the *edinovertsy* were linking themselves both to the Russian nation and to the history of the Orthodox Church prior to the schism. Therefore, using this particular space united three historical narratives: Russian nationhood, the pre-Nikonian unity of the Orthodox Church, and the foundation of *Edinoverie* that supposedly restored that unity.

The celebrations proper began on 27 October at the Troitskaia *Edinoverie* church. Metropolitan Vladimir (Bogoiavlenskii) and Bishop Parfenii of Mozhaisk led the liturgy, assisted by the *Edinoverie* clergy of that church. Present were five Orthodox abbots from local monasteries, the governor general of Moscow and his deputy, the head of the Moscow police, the deputy ober-procurator of the Holy Synod, and the procurator of the Synod's Moscow offices. Subbotin led a delegation from the Brotherhood of St. Petr the

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 16–17. Akathists are hymns dedicated to the saints. For more on their role within late imperial Russian Orthodoxy, see V. Shevzov, "Between 'Popular' and 'Official': Akafisty Hymns and Marian Icons in Late Imperial Russia," in J. P. Himka and A. Zayarnyuk, eds., *Letters from Heaven. Popular Religion in Russia and Ukraine* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 251–77.

¹⁵¹ S. K. Smirnov, *Spaso-vifanskii monastyr* (Moscow, 1869), 3–5.

¹⁵² For St. Sergii's national role, see D. B. Miller, *Saint Sergius of Radonezh, His Trinity Monastery, and the Formation of the Russian Identity* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2010).

Metropolitan.¹⁵³ After the proclamation of long lives for the imperial family, prayers were intoned to the eternal memory of Metropolitan Platon and Emperor Paul. The head *Edinoverie* priest then presented Metropolitan Vladimir with an icon of the Holy Trinity in a silver frame: ‘the bishop, taking the holy icon, blessed the *edinovertsy* for the tribute and expressed the desire that they help bring the Old Believer schismatics into the bosom of the Orthodox Church.’¹⁵⁴

Vladimir, after blessing the crowd of believers, went to the church’s almshouse to eat breakfast. Behind him on the walls of the dining hall were three ‘wonderful’ portraits, one of Tsar Paul, one of Metropolitan Platon and the other of the (unnamed) founder of the almshouse.¹⁵⁵ Toasts were given for Nicholas II, Metropolitan Vladimir and Vladimir Sabler, the deputy ober-procurator, thus celebrating state, Church and the Synodal order. Sabler made a short speech and then was followed by Subbotin who commemorated Pavel Prusskii’s memory.

The meaning of these ceremonies is clear. Having the second highest-ranking prelate of the Russian Orthodox Church perform the old rituals in the Troitskaia church was a clear symbol of the whole-hearted acceptance of the two fingered sign of the cross by the Orthodox hierarchy. The *edinovertsy*, for their part, declared their canonical subordination to Vladimir by proffering him an iconic version of their Troitskaia church in the form of the holy image of the Trinity. Another trinity was formed by the portraits staring out over the assembled guests eating in the almshouse. There could be no more perfect a pictorial form to demonstrate the harmony of action between three patrons of *Edinoverie*, one a churchman, one an emperor, and the other a Muscovite *edinoverets*. Together they would have reminded the audience of how *Edinoverie* came to exist in 1800, forged through the negotiations between Platon and the Muscovite Old Believers and all blessed by Paul.

The harmonious relations between Church and state were also emphasised in the joint commemoration of Platon and Paul in the liturgy itself and also the large contingent of secular officials present. Particularly noticeable was the attendance of the two high-ranking Synodal bureaucrats. So not only was this a celebration of what the Church and state could achieve when they worked in unison, it also venerated (and in doing so, reinforced) the Synodal church, a particular form of church-state relations. The presence

¹⁵³ Skvortsov, *Iubileinoe torzhestvo*, 19.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 20–21.

of the five abbots from local monasteries and the Moscow officials helped give everything a local flavour. This was a celebration of Muscovite *Edinoverie* as much as a celebration of the empire-wide rules that Platon had declared. Finally, the contingent from the missionary Brotherhood of St. Petr and the way in which Metropolitan Vladimir declared his thanks made it absolutely obvious what the Church expected from the *edinovertsy* and why it valued them: the assistance they could render bringing the erring Old Believers into the fold of the Church.

Subbotin's speech in Pavel's honour made the meaning of the ceremony transparent. '*Edinoverie* is also Orthodoxy and the *edinovertsy* are Orthodox, the same members of the united holy, ecumenical and apostolic church: ritual [...] cannot and must not serve as a pretext to any division between the flocks of the united Church.'¹⁵⁶ Subbotin also recalled Pavel's earlier example of joint ceremonies as a means 'for the practical realisation of this entirely correct understanding of *Edinoverie*.' Thus, Pavel's memory was woven into the 1900 celebrations: he was their progenitor.¹⁵⁷ This was reinforced in a liturgy in memory of Pavel held in the Nikol'skii *Edinoverie* monastery on 28 October. Pavel's legacy was placed at the centre of the ceremony, reminding the *edinovertsy* to follow the example of this 'apostle of *Edinoverie*!'¹⁵⁸

Subbotin also recalled Pavel's foundation of a church in Bukovina. The Brotherhood established a fund for its renovation, arguing 'that nothing can better evidence its [the Brotherhood's] empathy for *Edinoverie* on its centenary.'¹⁵⁹ Sabler proclaimed that the Synod was willing to give 10,000 roubles for this task, a considerable sum indeed.¹⁶⁰ Subbotin, the Brotherhood and Sabler were thus referencing the sheer success of *Edinoverie*. Not only had it spread in Russia but it had even managed to establish a presence in the Balkans, near the very heart of the Belaia Krinitza hierarchy. The existence of such a church also posed an answer to the ecumenical problem of *Edinoverie*. Should Platon and the Synod have gone to the eastern prelates for permission to found *Edinoverie* given that the old rituals were, at least according to one interpretation, under an anathema imposed by the Ecumenical Church? That the Bukovina church was under the jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Constantinople definitively proved that '*Edinoverie* is recognised by the Patriarch himself as a entirely

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 22.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 25.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 24.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 25, footnote.

legal and correct institution.’¹⁶¹ No-one could therefore doubt that the Synod acted with the consent of the Ecumenical Church. Subbotin therefore used the ceremony not only to reinforce his own conception of *Edinoverie* and Pavel’s memory but also to answer critics and Old Believers who doubted in *Edinoverie*’s canonical legitimacy.

The next day, Sabler made a speech at the Moscow seminary. His talk reminded his audience of how much missionary advantage the Church derived from *Edinoverie*. He discussed both *Edinoverie* schools and the typography: ‘these schools give Old Believers the opportunity to be more closely acquainted with us and in a few years, they will undoubtedly facilitate the reduction of hostility that divides us from our brethren. The Moscow *Edinoverie* typography has greatly facilitated our reconciliation [by] publishing books that are esteemed by the Old Believers.’¹⁶² Sabler, in a trend that was to reappear in all the speeches he made as part of scenarios of unity, went on to construct a narrative of episcopal support for *Edinoverie*, beginning with Nikoforos (Theotokos) and ending with the 1885 Kazan’ council. Metropolitan Filaret (Drozdov) of Moscow was quoted as was Arkadii (Fedorov) of Perm’, ‘that zealous preacher of truth.’ After all this, ‘doubts cannot be supported that the loyal sons of the Catholic Greco-Russian church who keep the so called old rituals dwell in complete unity of faith with the other flocks of this church.’¹⁶³ He thus repeated, almost verbatim, the words of the Synodal epistle to the *edinovertsy*. The effect of Sabler’s speech was to create an image of unchallenged and unchanging unity that had been supported by some of the most famous prelates of the Church. Even those distinctive institutions that *Edinoverie* harboured had a role to play in further fostering that unity by aiding reconciliation with those Old Believers still unable to accept the Church.

The ceremonies in Petersburg followed a similar pattern. Metropolitan Antonii (Vadkovskii) opened the events on 26 October in the cathedral of the Peter-Paul fortress with two requiems, one to the tsars in general and another specifically for Paul.¹⁶⁴ Once again, the spaces used are key to understanding the message: this cathedral is where all the Emperors of Russia from Peter the Great onwards were buried. On the following day, Antonii presided over the liturgy in the Nikol’skaia *Edinoverie* church where he was accompanied by the head priest of the Peter-Paul cathedral and the *Edinoverie* clergy. Present were D. N. Solov’ev, the head clerk of the chancellery of the Holy Synod, Vasili

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 24.

¹⁶² Ibid., 29.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 31.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 33.

Skvortsov, and Ksenofont Kriuchkov.¹⁶⁵ Antonii read out the Synod's letter to the congregation, 'producing a deep impression on the Old Believers. Many cried and, at the conclusion of the reading, the entire church, with the senior priest at their head, prostrated themselves on the ground before the first hierarch of the Russian Church.'¹⁶⁶ One of the *Edinoverie* priests was awarded with an epigonation (*palitsa*), 'the first to be granted to a *Edinoverie* priest in a hundred years.'¹⁶⁷ Then the Metropolitan, the clergy and the lay officials adjourned to the flat of the senior priest for a heady mix of champagne and tea.

Solov'ev, Kriuchkov, and Skvortsov all made speeches. Solov'ev argued that there was ultimately no difference between the singing styles of the Orthodox and *Edinoverie* choirs: to suggest that they were different was 'nothing more than a misunderstanding – perhaps deplorable and worthy of regret – but undoubtedly and obviously a mistake and nothing more. Our singing and yours are unconditionally one and the same.'¹⁶⁸ He proved his point by relating an anecdote of when he had showed an Old Believer a manuscript from the sixteenth century from which Orthodox choirs sung. Clearly the love of the hook notes and the music they produced was shared by both Orthodox and *edinovertsy*.¹⁶⁹

Kriuchkov hoped that the example of the Petersburg *edinovertsy* would inspire the rest of their brethren in Russia. After all 'does not the present celebratory liturgy, led by the first hierarch of all the Russian church together with a host of protohierarchs and priests and the praying flock of church, [all of whom] are made up from different estates (*soslovii*), prove true unity, do we not now form a united body of Christ's Church?'¹⁷⁰ Skvortsov confirmed the evangelical basis of the re-evaluation of ritual by quoting that 'the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life' (2 Corinthians 3:6). He argued that ritual was the letter whereas the grace of the sacraments was the spirit. By turning away from their previous attachment to ritual matters, the *edinovertsy* had imbibed the living giving sacraments.¹⁷¹

Again, the use of sacred space, the liturgy, gifts and speeches were woven together to present both the Synod's confessional message and a vision of Church and state working hand in hand by means of the Synodal system. The opening of the celebrations amidst the tombs of the Russian emperors and empresses is a particularly striking example of the

¹⁶⁵ Konstantin Pobedonostsev was unable to attend because of illness.

¹⁶⁶ Skvortsov, *Iubileinoe torzhestvo*, 35.

¹⁶⁷ An epigonation is a cloth worn on the right side of the body below the waist. In the Russian Orthodox Church, it is awarded as a mark of long and distinguished clerical service. Ibid., 35–36.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 40.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 44–45.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 57.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 60–61.

latter theme. Kriuchkov added an additional twist to his message of unity by commenting on its social aspect, perhaps reflecting ever-heightening class tensions in the industrialised northern capital. Skvortsov complimented Kriuchkov's statement of unity by mentioning the changed value of ritual, the key device by which the Orthodox Church had been able to accept the *edinovertsy* as part of its confession.

In 1900, there was not yet a legal Old Believer press to point out the places where liturgical artifice was divorced from historical fact. Nevertheless, the cracks were there and some of the speeches, accidentally or deliberately, drew attention to such points of tension. Ksenofont Kriuchkov's talk was laden with patronising terms for the *edinovertsy*. They were 'weak brethren' and *Edinoverie* itself was a 'little brother' to the Orthodox Church.¹⁷² This was odd given that he himself was a convert and that the Synodal missive consciously avoided such condescending language. No wonder a later Old Believer was to write that the Orthodox Church 'relates to it [*Edinoverie*] from on high as if [looking down] upon the lowest sort of people.'¹⁷³ The speech of Solov'ev on music was somewhat defensive in tone and even at one point slighted the unison singing adored by the *edinovertsy* by suggesting that it was 'not natural (*natural'nyi*), not without artifice, and not close to the usual means by which our church singing was always performed from old times up to now.'¹⁷⁴ Both of these speeches, whilst generally towing the Synodal line, might have served to jerk the *edinovertsy* out of any emotional reverie induced by the spectacle of seeing the Metropolitan of St. Petersburg preside over an old rite liturgy. They might have been reminded of the obstacles that still existed between themselves and the Orthodox.

Provincial Scenarios

The scenarios in Kazan' and Perm' were much less grandiose. In Perm', Bishop Petr (Losev) led the liturgy on 5 November. Here the arrangement of the choir directly reflected the example set by Nikeforos (Theotokos) over a century beforehand. In the right choir stall (*kliros*) was the episcopal choir and in the left were the *Edinoverie* singers using the hook notations.¹⁷⁵ The governor of the province honoured the proceedings with his presence as did clergy of the city's cathedral and a nearby Orthodox monastery. Prayers were performed for all of the tsars from Paul to Alexander III, Metropolitan

¹⁷² Ibid., 55–56.

¹⁷³ Shalaev, "Odn vykhod. (K edinovercheskomu s'ezdu)," *Tserkov'*, no. 4 (1912): 89.

¹⁷⁴ Skvortsov, *Iubileinoe Torzhestvo*, 49.

¹⁷⁵ Loginovskikh, "Stoletie edinoveriia" 454.

Platon, and the *Edinoverie* founder of the church. The letter from the Synod was read out and was supplemented with two addresses, one from Petr and the other from the missionary Fedor Loginovskikh. The bishop compared rituals to clothes: ‘as we change clothes corresponding to the time of year [...] so church rituals can be changed at the discretion of the Church: rituals themselves, when not animated by faith, do not have any significance.’¹⁷⁶ The missionary provided a brief lecture on the history of *Edinoverie* in Perm’ but he also paid attention to the *Edinoverie* parish on the coast of Lake Kuş in Anatolia.¹⁷⁷ He concluded with an admonition to both the Orthodox and the *edinovertsy* present: ‘no-one should denigrate and censure that which was blessed by the Church and the *edinovertsy* must remember that *Edinoverie* is concluded only in union with the Orthodox Church and that without this union there is no *Edinoverie*.’¹⁷⁸ This was a word for word repetition of the 1885 statement from the Kazan’ council, that credo of confessional integration, stressing that unity required action from both the Church and the *edinovertsy*.

In Kazan’, neither the archbishop nor his first suffragan were able to officiate over the celebratory liturgy and therefore the second suffragan, bishop Ioann of Cheboksary, was drafted in. Held on 28 October, the liturgy was attended by many Orthodox who ‘did not violate the rituals and customs of *Edinoverie*.’¹⁷⁹ Although no secular figures of any import were present, clerical representatives of the seminary and the Ecclesiastical Academy as well as a few missionaries attended the service. The bishop then led an icon procession from the Nikol’skaia *Edinoverie* church to that of the Four Evangelists where another liturgy was held.¹⁸⁰ Shleev, who wrote this description, recorded the ways in which Ioann obeyed the *Edinoverie* regulations. Even his fascia was embroidered with eight pointed crosses as opposed to the four-ended ones.¹⁸¹ The senior clergy made their way to Shleev’s apartment for repast, leading to a series of toasts to the tsar and the local bishops.

What distinguished the events in Kazan’ and Perm’ was their local character. This was most obvious in Loginskikh’s account of *Edinoverie*’s development in Perm’ and

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 455.

¹⁷⁷ F. Loginovskikh, “Uchrezhdenie edinoveriia v 100-letnee ego sushchestvovanie. (27-go oktiabria 1800-1900 goda),” *Permskie eparkhial’nye vedomosti*, no. 24 (1900): 491.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ S. Shleev, ed., *Edinoverie i ego stoletnee organizovannoe sushchestvovanie v Russkoi tserkvi* (St. Petersburg, 1901), 6.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 8.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

Ekaterinburg from 1801 onwards, although he did frame this narrative within a wider story about *Edinoverie*'s significance on a national and international level. In Kazan', the presence of the representatives of the local ecclesiastical educational institutions cemented *Edinoverie* as part and parcel of city's Orthodox heritage. The procession between the two churches was a way of symbolically walking backwards in time. The Nikol'skaia church had been founded in 1861 whilst that of the Evangelists dated back to 1798.¹⁸² The route of the procession followed *Edinoverie* from its most modern manifestation in the city back to its origins, echoing both where *Edinoverie* had come from and how it had matured.

In Perm', the Synodal script was followed exactly. The letter was read out, the full and unbreakable unity of Orthodoxy and *Edinoverie* was confirmed and the importance of ritual downplayed. The links between Paul, Platon and the local *edinovertsy* was enforced through prayers of remembrance and the presence of the governor placed the state's continuing seal of approval on *Edinoverie*.

In Kazan', however, there could be no mistaking the combative tone of Simeon Shleev. Even the way his account was written served to remind the reader of the ritual distinctions between Orthodoxy and *Edinoverie*. Those who depicted the ceremonies in Moscow, Petersburg and Perm' were perfunctory in their descriptions, mentioning ritual only to emphasise whether a hierarch used the two fingered sign of the cross. Shleev, on the other hand, went into eye-watering detail, noting every element of Ioann's episcopal service in Kazan' and how it was distinguished from the usual ritual order of such services. The reader could not but note how paramount the precise fulfilment of the pre-Nikonian ritual was for the *edinovertsy*. As Shleev himself said, the diligent 'attitude of His Grace Ioann to the old traditional rituals had a very beneficial influence on the *edinovertsy* and also on the Old Believers, [who are] similar to the former in matters of ritual externalities.'¹⁸³

His address manifested the views he was to bring to St. Petersburg five years later. The speech he made after the liturgy to the crowd of believers diverged from the Synodal missive in several respects. First, and most important, was his definition of *Edinoverie*:

Edinoverie, simply understood, is the unity in faith of someone with somebody else. Counterpoised in Russia to the schism, it is the aggregate of parishes in

¹⁸² For background on the newer church, see M. S., *Istoricheskii ocherk edinoveriia* (St Petersburg, 1867), 128–129.

¹⁸³ Shleev, *Edinoverie*, 7.

the Russian Church that are joined to it in matters of faith but divided from it in ritual. *Edinoverie* is a part of Old Belief, permitted on the basis of unity in faith to inter-communion with the Russian Church. It can be said otherwise: *Edinoverie* is Old Belief reconciled with the ecumenical Russian Church.¹⁸⁴

This definition was careful to assert the sacramental unity with the Orthodox Church but also heavily focussed on the Old Believer component of *Edinoverie* identity. This was a definite contrast to the Synodal definition, which made no mention of Old Belief at all.

As he went on, Shleev made clear how contested unity had been in the past. He blasted those who argued that the old rituals were not fully perfect.¹⁸⁵ More subtly, he introduced the bishop question. Many in the past had argued that *Edinoverie* was an ‘independent community,’ a full Church in its own right that did not enter the domain (*sostav*) of the Russian one. It was instead something akin to the Churches of the East, in communion with Russian Orthodoxy but not under its authority.¹⁸⁶ Shleev argued that *Edinoverie* was neither a Church nor even a community: ‘if *Edinoverie* composed a Church, then why in recent times was it deprived of its episcopate? A Church without a bishop cannot be. All the writings say this. What catastrophe destroyed the *Edinoverie* Church, shattering it to separate parishes, isolated from one another, subordinated to a lone bishop of another church? Is this not a present-day Israel in exile?’¹⁸⁷

Here Shleev was very craftily disguising his support for *Edinoverie* bishops as opposition in order to smuggle the issue into the minds of his audience without raising the hackles of the attendant Orthodox clergymen. The terms in which he poses his final two questions are precisely the same as that which he used in 1905 to describe the reason why he support *Edinoverie* bishops: because *Edinoverie* was constituted of divided parishes without any links between them and was subordinated to bishops who disliked their rituals and religious life. Those who had a similar mind set to Shleev would therefore be tempted to answer yes to the last query. *Edinoverie* was a new Israel in exile, meaning that the Russian Orthodox Church was akin to a contemporary Babylon.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 17.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 19.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 20.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 21.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 63. This cannot be dismissed as an earlier point in Shleev’s thought at which he opposed *Edinoverie* bishops. In the lecture he gave the very same evening he made it clear that he had sympathy for the idea.

Finally, in a toast to Antonii (Khrapovitskii), Shleev proposed that *Edinoverie* was valuable ‘for its strict regulation [*ustavnost*’] of the liturgy, for its loyalty to the commandments of the old church, social and family life, for the strict instilling of obedience, humility, temperance and the sturdy bearing of grief.’¹⁸⁹ This was the first sign of his later argument that *Edinoverie* bore useful fruits for the Orthodox Church beyond its role as a missionary camp.

All in all, Shleev’s deeds in Kazan’ amounted to an alternative narrative that contrasted deeply with the Synodal missive. It is instructive to briefly compare his words to those of Vladimir Sabler. The deputy ober-procurator glossed over the contentious issues of the past, providing instead the story of an unproblematic reconciliation of some Old Believers that stretched from 1800 to 1900. Shleev, on the other hand, deliberately mentioned many points of contention. Bringing up these divisive periods in the past of *Edinoverie* would no doubt have alerted at least some of the Kazan’ audience to the fragility of the ceremony being enacted by bishop Ioann and the clergy, pointing out the parts where the symbolic tapestry was threadbare.

The Rebirth of a Saint

Anna of Kashin was an obscure fourteenth century princess from the grand duchy of Tver’ who was canonised for her spectral presence at the siege of Kashin in 1611. However, it was rumoured that her hand was permanently fixed into the two-fingered sign of the cross and so she was de-canonised by the Orthodox Church in 1678. Nevertheless, she retained her popularity in Kashin and Tver’ province. In 1909, after a century of effort, the populace was finally able to persuade the Church to restore her saintly status.¹⁹⁰

The *edinovertsy* were invited to dispatch delegations from Petersburg and Moscow for the ceremony. Both groups showed their thanks for the invitation, the latter by dispatching a thousand-rouble donation and the former by creating two stipends in the newly established school under the Nikol’skaia church in the name of St. Anna.¹⁹¹ On 12 June, the holy day of the saint, the *edinovertsy* went to the general service held to mark the re-canonisation and participated in the procession of the relics around Kashin’s cathedral.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 15.

¹⁹⁰ S. A. Arkhangelov, “Pamiati blagovernoi velikoi kniagini Anny Kashinskoi,” *Pribavleniia k tserkovnym vedomostiam*, no. 42 (1908): 2032–38; R. H. Greene, *Bodies Like Bright Stars: Saints and Relics in Orthodox Russia* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2010), 76–88.

¹⁹¹ (Shleev), *Edinoverie*, 451.

On the next day, a specifically *Edinoverie* service was held. The infamous bishop Germogen (Doglanov) of Saratov presided over the liturgy and was assisted by a host of both Orthodox and *Edinoverie* clergy that included Shleev, Sergei Verkhovskii, and I. Polianskii, the Orthodox diocesan missionary and polemicist from Moscow.¹⁹² ‘The cathedral, full with pilgrims from all over mother Russia, became still more full when the *Edinoverie* service became known. Thousands of candles burnt among the reliquary of the saint and the icons from old painters with which the church was decorated.’¹⁹³ Shleev complimented Germogen on the beauty and accuracy of his service. The empathy felt by the Orthodox for their weeping *Edinoverie* brethren clearly evinced the reformation of a single flock after centuries of strife. Neither the *edinovertsy* nor the Orthodox could ‘believe that they lived in a twentieth century full of doubt. Some mysterious cloud of the thirteenth [sic] century, the time when St. Anna lived, had descended on those present.’¹⁹⁴

The next year also proffered an opportunity for unity in faith to be felt in spirit as well as in mind. In September, the relics were dispatched from Kashin for a tour around St. Petersburg. When they arrived at the Orthodox Znamenskaia church, the *edinovertsy* took part in the liturgical celebrations.¹⁹⁵ Shleev was quick to define the significance of this ceremony in terms of the Platonic rules. Whilst the fifth rule gave the *edinovertsy* the right to refuse participation in common services on saints’ days, they had forgone this privilege to join the Orthodox in worship around the venerated saint. ‘And it was the Petersburg *edinovertsy* who did this, those *edinovertsy* who more than all others protected the right of their isolation from the Church until this time. Love caused love in response. The edict of the Holy Synod about the honouring of St. Anna roused the hearts of the *edinovertsy*. The zeal of the latter infected the Orthodox.’¹⁹⁶ Shleev did not neglect the opportunity to criticise the godlessness of the twentieth century: did not this remarkable example of piety put the spirit of the times to shame?

On one level, Shleev’s description of the events that unfolded in 1909 and 1910 provide a standard account of the ceremonial enactment of unity in faith. There was no clear-cut attempt to directly castigate the Orthodox Church or its past views on *Edinoverie*. He depicts, above all, an emotive understanding of unity whereby piety and sympathy

¹⁹² For the activities of Germogen, see S. Dixon, “The ‘Mad Monk’ Iliador in Tsaritsyn,” in S. M. Dixon, ed., *Personality and Place in Russian Culture: Essays in Memory of Lindsey Hughes* (London: Modern Humanities Research Association, 2010), 377–415.

¹⁹³ (Shleev), *Edinoverie*, 452.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 453.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 456.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

between believers were the key components rather than the Platonic rules or canonical subordination. A closer reading, however, reveals his own distinctive twist on the celebrations that surrounded St. Anna. Similar to his portrayal of the anniversary celebrations in Kazan', Shleev provides incredibly detailed descriptions of the old liturgies performed by Orthodox clergy, a focus on ritual observance that one does not discover in other accounts. As before this was a way in which Shleev could highlight the importance of ritual for the *edinovertsy* but it ran at variance with the Synod's attempts to downplay the distinction in matters of rite.

The references to the godless age of the early twentieth century evoke memories of the petition he dispatched in 1905 wherein he asserted that one of *Edinoverie*'s fundamental tasks was to rejuvenate Orthodox piety in an age where it had all but died off. Once again, the idea of a pious *Edinoverie*, filled with the spirit of the pre-Petrine past, was being implicitly opposed to a secularised Synodal Orthodoxy. Certainly, Shleev's sequencing of events (the issue of the re-canonisation edict; the zeal it generated in the *edinovertsy*; the 'infection' of the Orthodox with that spirit) reflected that idea. No doubt the word 'infected' was used with more than a touch of irony since it was the very term that had often been deployed by Orthodox churchmen to justify the isolation of the *edinovertsy* who might spread the attitudes of the schism into their flock.

No less notable is the subtle criticism of the fifth rule of Platon. Shleev presents it as a blockade that had to be overcome by the feelings generated through Anna's canonisation. The *edinovertsy* of St. Petersburg might have interiorised and defended the right not to join the Orthodox in joint prayers but it was the rule that had made such an interiorisation possible in the first place. Only when the Synod had extended an act of love (its canonisation of an admired saint) could the *edinovertsy* find it in themselves to overcome the habitual suspicion of joint ceremonies and come together with the Orthodox. The hint was that the Church needed to go further to unite the *edinovertsy* properly with the rest of the faithful.

Such an interpretation is supported by the far more negative conclusion of the account where the feelings of unity in 1909 and 1910 are contrasted to recent incidents of hostility: 'at the time when the *edinovertsy* placed petitions about the gift of bishops similar to them in rite and thought, some rebukes and insults addressed to the Orthodox Old Believers were heard. The majority of Orthodox look on this effort of the *edinovertsy*

badly.’ For Shleev, only acts of love like the recanonisation of St. Anna would ‘completely destroy mutual misunderstandings and distrust.’¹⁹⁷

Shleev’s retelling of this particular ceremony of unity thus diverges from the Synodal narrative in almost all respects. Not only did it focus heavily on ritual distinction but it also reiterated Shleev’s particular views on *Edinoverie*’s value and his critical stance towards the rules of Platon. It was not so much a celebration of unity in faith but rather a call that more needed to be done to realise it. To turn an intention into actuality, the Synod should subscribe to Shleev’s own views. This account thereby furnishes a perfect example of the ways in which scenarios of unity, convened by bishops to bring reality to their own integrative vision, could be seized to give voice to other conceptions that were discrepant with official policy.

Congresses

The Power of Assemblies

On Sunday 22 January 1912, the first National Congress of *Edinoverie* opened in St Petersburg. After seven years of patience, here was a chance to air concerns before the great and the good. The roster of guests was certainly impressive. Twenty one hierarchs of the Russian Orthodox Church were in attendance, along with ober-procurator Vladimir Sabler, the Tsar’s confessor, a representative of the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, all of the high ranking Synodal bureaucrats, and representatives from the State Duma, including the brother of Petr Stolypin, the recently assassinated premier.¹⁹⁸ 250 voting delegates, summoned from all corners of the Russian Empire, joined them. Even some of priestly Old Believers from Ekaterinburg turned up. The guest list broadcast several messages. The presence of the Patriarch of Constantinople’s representative was intended to answer the niggling question of *Edinoverie*’s ecumenical acceptability; the statesmen served to connect Church and state together; and the Old Believers were a reminder of *Edinoverie*’s ongoing mission to convert the schismatics.¹⁹⁹

The ceremonies began with a divine liturgy held in the Nikol’skaia church with archbishop Antonii (Khrapovitskii) presiding. After he concluded, the crowd formed a cross procession and marched solemnly from the church on Nikol’skaia street to the ober-procurator’s residence on Liteinyi prospekt. The march linked *Edinoverie* with the

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 458.

¹⁹⁸ V. M. Skvortsov, ed., *Pervyi Vserossiiskii edinovercheskii s’ezd* (St. Petersburg, 1912), 4–5.

¹⁹⁹ For their leader’s participation, see *ibid.*, 42.

Synodal order, taking them from their place of worship across the imperial capital to the home of the state's principal agent inside the Orthodox Church.

Vladimir (Bogoiavlenskii) and Antonii (Khrapovitskii), the chairman of the congress, delivered the opening addresses. Then Sabler rose to speak. For him, the very fact that *Edinoverie* had existed for over a century was proof that the Church 'did not look upon *Edinoverie* as a transition from imperfection to perfection and from lies to truth. It, with love, blessed the usage of the old rituals by all those who sincerely desired to subordinate themselves to its indisputable authority and to dwell in unity with it.'²⁰⁰ Sabler's speech was almost a word-for-word repetition of that which he had given to the Moscow seminary in 1900, once again inventing a tradition of uninterrupted unity between the Church and its convert flock.

After several other speeches by the more eminent guests, the congress sang the national anthem and dispersed in preparation for the days of work that lay before them. A journalist from *Sankt Peterburgskie vedomosti* described the scenes he saw at the assembly:

Together with simple people, who travelled from distant regions of Russia, we saw people with higher education, not only in the sphere of theology and the church canons but also in other arenas of human knowledge. We met people of different social positions. There were professors of canon law, church iconography and even physiology (Prince Ukhtomskii), theology students, engineers and the usual representatives of our people still loyal to the testament of tradition.²⁰¹

The congress united all of the Russian people together, eradicating differences in class, origin, and education. Another newspaper article expanded upon this when commenting on the Old Believer traditions exalted in the congress: 'faith is before all national unanimity, the single and undivided soul of the tribe, a sublime connection that unites together past generations with those living and with all their descendants.'²⁰² The unity displayed therefore did not just simply eradicate social distinctions but also connected past, present, and future into a single national group. Unity in faith was therefore not just a simple matter of reconciliation between the Church and the Old Believers but represented,

²⁰⁰ V. M. Skvortsov, ed., *Pervyi Vserossiiskii edinovercheskii s'ezd*, 7.

²⁰¹ *Pervyi Vserossiiskii s'ezd pravoslavnykh staroobriadtssev (edinovertsev)* (St Petersburg, 1912), *prilozhenie*, 162.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 158.

at least for these two secular commentators, the unifying of the Russian nation under the aegis of Orthodoxy.

When the congress closed on 31 January, a delegation was dispatched to Nicholas II and Tsarevich Aleksei. The presence of Shleev and other *edinovertsy* made this the first time that an emperor had met with Orthodox Old Believers since Nicholas I had personally visited Dobrianka in 1845. During an audience that lasted thirty-five minutes, Antonii (Khrapovitskii) presented the Tsar with an icon of St. Anna of Kashin whilst Shleev gave Nicholas and Aleksei two of the distinctive Old Believer prayer cushions (*podruchniki* or *kovriki*).²⁰³ The audience united the Emperor, an Orthodox bishop and the Empire's most famous *edinoverets* in a symbolic re-enactment of the creation of the rules of Platon, emphasising the role of Church, state and schism in jointly forging the movement. The gifts emphasised the success of the ritual re-evaluation, demonstrating to all that the ruler and his heir had no problem in accepting liturgical items used in pre-Nikonian church services. Equally, the icon of St. Anna was a reminder of the beneficence that the imperial family had showed to the *edinovertsy* by supporting the re-canonisation of the saint.²⁰⁴

The ceremonies surrounding the congress were different from others not in kind but in degree. They were the epitome of the practices established in 1900, the grandest and most sumptuous scenario of unity to ever be produced. For the first time, *edinovertsy* and Orthodox who did not participate would be able to see pictures of a scenario of unity rather than just read about it. The official version of the protocols, edited by Shleev, contained a whole host of photographs that ranged from portraits of the leading personalities to group shots taken both in the congress hall and outside the Nikol'skaia church.

However, congresses posed both opportunities and problems when it came to symbolically integrating *Edinoverie* into the Orthodox confession. In terms of opportunities, they gave bishops and the Synod an opportunity to show the care they felt for the *edinovertsy* and their problems. Bishop Filaret (Nikol'skii) told the delegates at the 1908 Viatka congress that 'I have always loved and [continue to] love the *edinovertsy*.'²⁰⁵ As one priest commented in his coverage of the Kursk congress in May 1906, 'in concern about the needs of the Kursk flock, expressed in an entire range of

²⁰³ Ibid., 370.

²⁰⁴ Grand Duchess Elizaveta Fedorovna had attended the canonisation on behalf of the imperial family.

²⁰⁵ "Viatskii edinovercheskii s'ezd (10-17 iunia 1908 g.) i ego postanovleniia," *Viatskie eparkhial'nye vedomosti* no. 41 (1908): 1075.

parish, superintendant and diocesan councils and congresses, the bishop [Pitirim (Okhnov)] did not leave the needs our Kursk *Edinoverie* without his pastoral attention.²⁰⁶ Indeed, Pitirim both initiated the organisation of the conference and chaired two of the three sessions, thereby undertaking the lion's share of the work.

Finally, congresses could be the stages for events of only local significance. Pitirim used the closing ceremony of the Kursk congress to join a *beglopopovtsy* minister and his wife to *Edinoverie*, using the old rite as he gave the converts their first Eucharist within the Church.²⁰⁷ This was a vision of *Edinoverie* in Kursk triumphing over local Old Belief. A schismatic leader was claimed as one of their own in a prominent and even provocative scene of missionary efficacy. In Viatka, the assembled *Edinoverie* and Orthodox delegates first went to the city's cathedral to worship at the relics of St. Trifon, a local holy man from the late sixteenth century, before proceeding collectively to the city's rebuilt *Edinoverie* church for the divine liturgy.²⁰⁸ This action affirmed *Edinoverie's* participation in Viatka's religious history and harkened back to a time not blighted by religious division.

The central problem of the congresses lay not in their opening or closing celebrations, which could be tightly scripted, but in their discussions. These debates could not be planned before hand. Therefore they might present views that were deeply discordant with the Synodal narrative. One method by which the Church might try and turn congresses into more harmonious and fully operational scenarios of unity was by limiting their remits. This occurred in the 1910 Moscow congress where the Synod took controversial issues like bishops and the anathemas off the table and allowed only the debate of local issues.²⁰⁹ However, this was not applied in Kursk, Viatka (where they had 'full freedom of speech') or Petersburg. The presence of Orthodox clergymen and missionaries could be of doubtful value. It meant that the Synodal narrative would at least gain a hearing but it also meant that friction would be generated by two competing definitions of meaning of *Edinoverie* and its place within the Orthodox Church. This would lead to the open airing of contentious issues that perpetuated the appearance of confessional fracture and discord rather than unity.

²⁰⁶ I. Riabukhin, "Pravoslavno-starobriadcheskii (edinovercheskii) s''ezd v g. Kurske," *Pravda pravoslaviia*, no. 1 (1907): 10.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 13.

²⁰⁸ "Viatskii edinovercheskii s''ezd" no. 41: 1075–1076.

²⁰⁹ *Trudy moskovskogo edinovercheskogo s''ezda* (Moscow, 1910), 6.

Ultimately, the problem was that the congresses had two very different values ascribed to them. For Shleev and his supporters, they were fundamental to the plan of separatist confessionalisation. They were both a basis for, and a manifestation of, the campaign for greater institutionalisation, administrative centralisation and ritual standardisation. This was particularly true for the National Congress, which was the first time ever the *edinovertsy* of the Russian Empire had joined together as a national group to discuss their difficulties. For the Synod, however, the congresses were opportunities to broadcast confessional integration by means of ceremony and speeches. The clash of these two values even made its way into the titles of the two major textual representations of the 1912 event. Shleev entitled his account ‘The First All Russian Congress of Orthodox Old Believers (*edinovertsy*)’ whilst Skvortsov termed it ‘The First All Russian *Edinoverie* Congress,’ thus emphasising two different views on the nature of *Edinoverie*. Consequently, friction was not just likely but inevitable.

No single issue better demonstrates this than the problem of the comparative age of the rituals. The Synod referred to the *edinovertsy* as the ‘the flock of the Apostolic and Catholic Greco-Russian Orthodox Church who keep the so-called old rituals.’ This suggested that the pre-Nikonian rituals were not, in the eyes of the Synod, as old as the post-Nikonian ones, something that was sure to inflame sensibilities. The issue flared up repeatedly and caused unseemly scenes in the congresses. The most heated debate in the Viatka congress occurred precisely because the *edinovertsy* there insisted on terming the integration of elements of Orthodox liturgical practice into *Edinoverie* churches as ‘novelties’: the Orthodox delegates took this as an insult against the antiquity of their rituals. The debate took over two entire sessions before it was decided to place the matter one side for future resolution.²¹⁰ The 1912 congress proved even more fractious when confronted by the same difficulties. When Shleev tabled a proposal for the renaming of *Edinoverie* to Orthodox Old Belief, thus implying that the rituals of the *edinovertsy* were older than those of the Orthodox, the missionary Aktsipetrov insulted him, ‘calling him a chameleon,’ and accused him of pursuing a ‘hidden aim.’ The protocols record shouting from the audience upon hearing the *Edinoverie* leader referred to in such terms.²¹¹ Things did not improve the next day when Prince Aleksei Ukhtomskii and Father Dribintsev called the Orthodox ‘new believers’ (*novooobriadtsy*), a time honoured Old Believer slur. Rancour again exploded in the halls of the procuratorial residence. Skvortsov

²¹⁰ “Viatskii edinovercheskii S’ezd” 1090–1091.

²¹¹ Skvortsov, *Pervyi Vserossiiskii edinovercheskii s’ezd*, 21.

sarcastically commented in his notes, 'here is "striving to unity" with the Orthodox Church! Prior to this time only clear schismatics insulted the Church with this insolent and libellous name.'²¹²

The problem posed for the Synodal narrative by these angry arguments did not necessarily lie in the fury with which they were conducted. This was bad enough, for not only did not it publically show the division between the missionaries and leading *edinovertsy* but it also let the Old Believer press savage the 'hooliganism of the missionaries' and publish claims that Griniakin was drunk.²¹³ The crux of the matter lay in the fact that the argument existed at all. The Synod's letter and the ceremonies of the anniversary deliberately played up the idea that ritual was considered only a middling matter, that they were (to use bishop Petr's metaphor) interchangeable clothes. That friction was generated by the use of the term 'old' and 'new' in reference to rites showed not only that the *edinovertsy* themselves had not fully accepted the consequences of the ritual re-evaluation but also that the Orthodox themselves were unwilling to let go of the idea that their rituals were superior because of their reputed proximity to the Greek originals. In other words, the confessional integration plan launched by the Synod would always face the stumbling block of ritual difference, an obstacle to unity in faith that the congresses illuminated in the most public possible way.

Attacks from Without

The secular and Old Believer press were keen to tear away the ceremonial gauze. *Russkoe slovo* used the convening of the Moscow congress to ask why the *edinovertsy* had not yet been granted their request for a national congress. The author imagined the Synod as saying, 'you are alien, we have never recognised you as true Orthodox. You are almost the same to us as the Old Believers.' Therefore it was only natural that 'the *edinovertsy* not only do not attempt to fuse [*slit'sia*] with the Orthodox but always remember that they have their peculiarities, an Old Believer order of life.'²¹⁴ This journalist clearly had no time for the ceremonial significance of the Moscow congress with its joint liturgies and episcopal support. He went straight for the jugular, declaring that the Synod had absolutely no interest in forging unity and that it was to blame for *Edinoverie's* continued zealotry in ritual matters.

²¹² Ibid., 26.

²¹³ Shalaev, "Resul'taty edinovercheskogo s''ezda," *Tserkov'* no. 6 (1912): 140.

²¹⁴ *Trudy moskovskogo edinovercheskogo s''ezda*, 83.

Other writers decided to use the opportunity to propound a more positive view of Old Belief. In 1912, the correspondent for *Novoe vremia* declared ‘honour and glory to the Old Believers: they stand as the entire nation [*narod*] should stand: in freedom of faith.’²¹⁵ His praise for the Old Believers went further: ‘I think they with their national feelings more deeply understood the essence of faith than [Tsars] Aleksei or Peter.’ The author of the piece for the *Sankt Petersburgskye vedomosti* echoed such sentiments when he criticised the missionaries for believing that ‘Old Belief is something not independent and valuable for us Russians as an idiomatic product of the creativity of the national soul native to us in the sphere of rituals, church liturgy and every day life [*byta*].’ ‘The psychology of the people’ therefore would be on the side of Shleev’s *edinovertsy* rather than that of the missionaries.²¹⁶ This was hardly the celebration of the Church’s missionary strategy that the Synod wanted. Indeed, these kinds of comments show how deeply ingrained the idea of the schismatics as the truer form of popular Orthodoxy was among secular writers.

The *Novoe vremia* criticism of the Synodal order was extended when the article discussed whether the *edinovertsy* were part of the same confession as the Orthodox:

if so, then numerous Orthodox will be tempted to convert to *Edinoverie*, as they are more free in their parish lives and less bound by the bureaucracy of the Holy Synod. We have cared for the *edinovertsy* and the *inovertsy*, they are permitted many things which are not allowed to the Orthodox. At the end of the day, it would be entirely advantageous for the Orthodox to be baptised as Germans [i.e. Protestants] or to accept Judaism – in reality here are the dominant faiths.²¹⁷

His point was to criticise the 1905 Edict of Religious Toleration which gave many freedoms to the religious minorities of the Russian Empire but had not released the Russian Orthodox Church from its tight relationship with the state. It had had no ability to call a council and end the Synodal system, its rigid bureaucracy and undemocratic parish management. Shleev too made a veiled reference to the lack of a Church Council when he stated that the first national assembly ‘was not a congress but a council [*sobor*] – a forerunner of a great council in Russia which Russians await with impatience.’²¹⁸ Thus the meticulous attempt to use the 1912 congress to symbolically unite Church and state fell

²¹⁵ *Pervyi Vserossiiskii s’ezd pravoslavnykh staroobriadtsev*, 157.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 164.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 160.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 271–272.

victim to the acerbic criticisms of secular commentators who used the proceedings to demonstrate precisely why the current order of Church-state relations was unsatisfactory.

The Old Believer press was able to play upon many of the fears that the *edinovertsy* themselves expressed. From the Moscow congress, for example, it was clear to one polemicist that ‘*Edinoverie* in many places is losing its shape, it is constantly fusing with Nikonism.’²¹⁹ In other words, the old rituals were under threat from the union with the official Church. Indeed, the Old Believers targeted the very heart of confessional integration when they attacked *Edinoverie* congresses. Decrying the lack of freedom in the 1912 gathering, the journal *Tserkov’* declared that ‘the numerous official assurances that ‘Orthodoxy’ and *Edinoverie* are one and the same, a single church, strikes a clearly false note. These assurances are only political tactfulness for the keeping the *edinovertsy* in subordination to the official church and they absolutely do not have application to the localities, to real life.’²²⁰

This was a root and branch deconstruction of the Synod’s 1900 letter and the scenarios of unity that enacted it. The ceremonies had no bearing on reality, the Old Believers argued, but were only a tool to keep the *edinovertsy* in their thrall. The most consistent theme in Old Believer journalism about the congresses was their role in attempting to liberate the *edinovertsy* from the cloying control of the Church’s bureaucratic institutions. Of the 1910 assembly in the old capital, one journalist wrote that ‘the Moscow *edinovertsy* are discussing the question about the liberation of *Edinoverie* from the authority of the ecclesiastical consistories,’ the latter being depicted as ‘a partition between people and bishop.’²²¹ The title of this article, ‘The Heroism [*podvizhnost’*] of *Edinoverie*’, was far more generous than others, which depicted the *edinovertsy* as little more than slaves trapped by the spiderlike Synod. The theme of *Edinoverie* victimhood was common. Take this comment on the Viatka congress for example:

A temporary and ugly phenomena, dead, pathetic and doomed to final destruction, with undisguised contempt barely even tolerated, *Edinoverie* has unexpectedly stirred and shown some signs of life. Just as a chained criminal, weakened by hunger, beatings and heavy imprisonment, hopelessly attempts to liberate himself from bondage, to escape to freedom – so *Edinoverie* makes

²¹⁹ “Sredi edinovertsev,” *Tserkov’*, no. 6 (1910): 181.

²²⁰ N., “O smysle edinoveriia. (Po povodu edinovercheskogo s’ezda),” *Tserkov’*, no. 4 (1912): 90.

²²¹ “Podvizhnost’ edinoveriia,” *Tserkov’*, no. 47 (1908): 1581.

desperate attempts to liberate itself from under a heavy and degrading Synodal and consistorial regime that is contrary to Christian freedom.²²²

It is unsurprising that the author suggests to the *edinovertsy* that the only true path to liberation was to join with the Belaia Krinitza hierarchy. The Old Believer journals thus exploited the gaps where scenarios of unity failed to cover up the distrust and the suspicion of the past to proselytise. This was the only sense in which the Old Believers valued the congresses. They might open the pathway back to Old Belief.

Even when Old Belief was incorporated into the scenarios of unity, it proved disruptive. The contingent of Old Believers at the 1912 congress is a case in point. On the surface, this suggested that there was still hope that *Edinoverie* would accomplish its great mission of bringing the schism to the end. As Antonii (Khrapovitskii) commented when one Old Believer spoke about the anathemas, ‘this day will be historic because today a representative of the *chasovennyi* concord calmly discusses with us the removal of these anathemas.’²²³ The problem was that the Old Believer spoke in agreement with Shleev’s suggestion that the anathemas should be revoked entirely, a demand the missionaries fervently opposed. This allowed them to declare that Shleev would rather side with a schismatic than with the Church, further adding to an already acrimonious atmosphere.²²⁴ The core of the matter lies once again with the divergent values attached to the congress. No doubt the Synod believed that the presence of Old Believers would prove to be attractive window dressing, demonstrative of *Edinoverie*’s continuing appeal to the schismatics. Shleev, however, utilised the Old Believers to back his own campaign for bishops and the removal of the anathemas. Such an utilisation could only incur the wrath of the missionaries and a very public display of confessional discord.

In summation, secular journalists and Old Believers polemicists pointed out where historical experience conflicted with the ceremonial representation of unity in faith and the Synodal order. By playing on past conflicts and pushing them through the interpretative prism of their own ideological and religious views, writers beyond the control of the Synod were able to hijack the celebrations, representing them in such a way that they ended up serving purposes at distinct variance to those of the central administration of the Orthodox Church. For secular commentators, the disputes over *Edinoverie* were transformed into demands for a freer Church and into depictions of Old Belief as an

²²² O., “Dvizhenie sredi edinovertsev. (K Viatskomu s’ezdu),” *Tserkov’*, no. 23 (1908): 821.

²²³ Skvortsov, *Pervyi Vserossiiskii edinovercheskii s’ezd*, 38.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 53.

authentically national religion. The Old Believer press manipulated the congresses into ceremonies that proved the vacuity of unity in faith, making them symbols of either a *Edinoverie* yearning for freedom or of a despotic Church keeping down the masses with bread and circuses. The solution to the inherent emptiness of *Edinoverie* was conversion to Old Belief.

A Visitor From the East

Nicholas II celebrated the three hundredth anniversary of the accession of the House of Romanov to the Russian throne in 1913. He did so with a panoply of ceremonies, many of which sought to once again affirm the connection between Church and state. The holy veneer of the Orthodox faith would serve to legitimise the monarchy in increasingly troubled times. One small but interesting element of this scheme was the invitation extended to Patriarch Gregory IV of Antioch. Elected in 1906, Gregory was somewhat unusual because he was only the second Arab to hold this position. All the previous incumbents had been Greek. Upon his arrival in Russia in February, Gregory toured several Russian cities, conducted liturgies and made several high profile speeches in Church institutions.²²⁵

No doubt his participation in the Romanov dynasty's anniversary was intended to send several messages. It would remind all of the Russian monarchy's protection of the Orthodox communities and churches of the Ottoman Empire, a traditional role that had become highly politicised in the nineteenth century: Nicholas I had fought the Crimean War at least partially to defend these beleaguered co-religionists. The Patriarch's visit in the tense international atmosphere of 1913 was no doubt a message to the Ottoman Empire, and their German allies, that Russia was still maintaining its responsibilities to Orthodox Christians in the Orient. Therefore Gregory's sojourn in Russia was both intended for domestic and international consumption. It affirmed Nicholas as an Orthodox monarch who was prepared to fulfil his traditional role of protecting the Churches of the East from Ottoman predations.

Despite his busy schedule, Gregory found the time to go to Shleev's Nikol'skaia church on 9 March. Joined by Antonii (Khrapovitskii) and bishop Veniamin of Gdovsk, Gregory performed the service with the old rituals. He blessed the crowds with the two-fingered sign of the cross and was serenaded by *Edinoverie* choirs assembled from the schools

²²⁵ For Gregory's visit, see I. I. Sokolov, *Pravoslavnyi Grechskii Vostok* (St Petersburg, 1913) and RGIA f. 796, op. 197 VI ot. 1 st., d. 16.

under the church. Although he preached in Arabic (an interpreter from the Synodal offices was at hand), he propounded prayers to the Tsar in Old Church Slavonic.²²⁶ The audience contained two representatives of the secular government in the forms of Vladimir Sabler and V. T. Sheviakov, the deputy minister of education. After the service, the Patriarch was greeted by a ‘delighted’ crowd of *edinoversty* on the street outside. He proceeded to the parish school to make a speech to the assembled students and made a toast to Tsarevich Aleksei after whom the school had been renamed in 1912.²²⁷ Once again, the location of the celebrations and the presence of officials demonstrates that these scenarios of unity always had their eye on linking Church more closely to the state as well as trying to incorporate the *edinoversty* more firmly into the Orthodox confession.

Shleev tied the performance of Gregory to the last Patriarch of Antioch to have had an impact on the history of *Edinoverie*, Macarios III. He was the hierarch who had first placed the anathema on the two-fingered sign of the cross in 1657. Therefore Gregory had undone the work of his predecessor: ‘this liturgy is all the more important since during its performance the Patriarch of Antioch used the old rituals and the old customs, showing that the matter of salvation is not harmed by difference’ in ritual matters.²²⁸ Thus, ‘His Beatitude through his service among the *edinoversty* has done more than could be done with a whole volume of essays. By his service he has recognised the equality in honour of the old and new rituals. By his service, the Patriarch has shown that the anathemas of the Moscow councils do not relate to the *edinoversty*.’²²⁹ Shleev’s statement was a distinct variance to his usual view on the anathemas, a sign that he was consciously avoiding further confrontation in the era of the *rasputinshchina*.

The significance of Patriarch Gregory’s visit was connected to two core problems. The first was the ecumenical issue: by performing the pre-Nikonian rites, Gregory had physically demonstrated their acceptability within the international Orthodox Church and therefore that the Russian Church had been correct to allow them. Secondly, it was relevant to the disputes over the anathemas. Gregory clearly did not think that they applied to the ritual alone but rather to those who used the ritual to signify dissent.

²²⁶ S. Shleev, “Sluzhenie antiokhiiskogo patriarkha Grigoriia IV-go v edinovercheskoi, chto na Nikolaevskoi ul. g. Spb., tserkvi i znachenie ego,” *Pribavleniia k tserkovnym vedomostiam*, no. 11 (1913): 501.

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ Ibid., 502.

As the subsequent years were to prove, Gregory's service was no more than a stop-gap. The *edinovertsy* continued to call for the abolition of the anathemas in 1917 and some remained convinced that the Patriarchs of the East needed to formally renounce the seventeenth century proclamations of their predecessors.²³⁰ This particular scenario of unity therefore proved unable to resolve the matter of the anathemas even when no-one offered a counter-reading of the Church's narrative. The problem that it sought to address was simply too firmly engrained within the Platonic structures of *Edinoverie* to be disposed of through purely ceremonial means.

Conclusion

To conclude this chapter, let us turn to that most sumptuous of the scenarios of unity, the 1912 National *Edinoverie* Congress. The Synod and the state spared no expense in trying to utilise this occasion both to broadcast the message of unity and harmonious relations between the state and the Church. The number of hierarchs present; the visit to Nicholas II; the attendance of Old Believers and numerous dignitaries, both lay and clerical; the handsome official volume of the protocols: every point of the opening and closing ceremonies was designed to forge the impression of a united confession containing both Orthodox and *edinovertsy*, harmoniously working together to debate issues and foster understanding. This was an invented tradition, forged for the purposes of confessional integration.

The sheer hollowness of these displays was demonstrated by the rancour of the debates themselves. Barely a session went by without name calling and shouting. Shleev was castigated as a quasi-schismatic, a wolf in sheep's clothing. He in turn slung insults back at the missionaries: 'I would ask the missionaries here to listen more and speak less because this is a congress of *edinovertsy* and not a debate with Old Believers.'²³¹ Antonii (Khrapovitskii) was forced to call for calm on more than one occasion and spent much of his closing address trying to forge some kind of peace between the warring groups.²³² Shleev was ultimately right to say that the missionaries 'marred and continued to mar the

²³⁰ For the debate over the anathemas in the second National *Edinoverie* Congress, see *Vtoroi Vserossiiskii s'ezd pravoslavnykh staroobriadtssev (edinoveritsev) v N. Novgorode 23-28 iulia 1917 goda.* (Petrograd, 1917), 32–34.

²³¹ Skvortsov, *Pervyi Vserossiiskii edinovercheskii s'ezd*, 25.

²³² For attempts to chide or calm down the debates see *ibid.* 24, 45. For Antonii's closing remarks, see 15.

memory of this congress by their activities and their writings in *Missionerskoe obozrenie!*’ although of course he carefully avoided ascribing any blame to himself.²³³

Meanwhile, the Old Believer press sneered at the whole enterprise, pointing to every hostile statement as evidence that confessional integration was a deceitful hypocrisy, aimed at luring the naïve *edinovertsy* into a false sense of security. Secular journalists used the opportunity to take pot shots at the Synodal system of Church governance whilst at the same time demonstrating the gulf between themselves and the Synod. They thought the Old Believers were far more authentic representatives of Russian nationhood than the Petrine Church ever was. All of this must have been deeply troubling for the Synod and the state. On the one hand, the acidic reaction of the Old Believers cannot have inspired confidence in *Edinoverie*’s ability to attract the schismatics, even as the Synod pushed forward with its plan to integrate the former more firmly into the Orthodox confession. The reaction of the secular press showed that, despite all efforts, few were now willing to accept the Synodal order and that attempts to create a version of national identity predicated on membership to the official Church had largely failed to spread beyond ecclesiastical circles.

However, the main reason why the ceremonies of unity failed was precisely because of the strife between Shleev and the missionaries. They embodied two distinct ways of looking at *Edinoverie* and its problems that were nearly irreconcilable. One side saw the value of *Edinoverie* in its ritual compact and sought to protect that above all; the other believed that *Edinoverie* derived its worth from its relationship with the Orthodox Church and thus no kind of separation, administrative or otherwise, could be countenanced. The artfully organised ceremonies of unity would necessarily become battle sites. The congresses in particular were exposed to this problem, given that Shleev saw them as fundamental to his plans for *Edinoverie* and thus sought to use them in every possible way to further his campaign. And when the ceremonies became the scenes of polemical skirmishes, they lost what value they had for generating unity. Any literate *edinovertsy*, picking up a copy of the protocols for the 1912 congress, would have been left in very little doubt that there was immense gulf between the spokesmen for *Edinoverie* and the spokesmen for the mission.

The problem for the Synod and some of its hierarchs was that the cracks in the narrative they sought to encode through ceremony and ritual were too deeply rooted to simply be

²³³ *Pervyi Vserossiiskii s'ezd*, 272.

washed away by window dressing. The debates surrounding *Edinoverie* bishops, the anathemas, the role of the ecumenical Church, and the very name of *Edinoverie* itself were not merely theological trivialities that could be swept under the rug. They sat at the very heart of those tensions that Metropolitan Platon had embodied in his rules. They perched precariously on the confessional borders erected between *Edinoverie* and Orthodoxy. Their resolution could not come from ceremonies that pretended they did not exist. They had to be solved by definitive and firm reform. Shleev himself was the fruit of the failure of the Church to enact reform throughout the nineteenth century, he was the manifestation of the sharp feelings of religious difference produced by the rules of Platon. However, after 1905 the Church was in no position to give the kind of reforms required. It was constrained by the tantalising but illusive promise of a Council and by the gathering strength of reactionaries. The scenarios of unity were, at best, a way to try and hide the fact that the Church was burdened by a century-old settlement with the *edinovertsy* but lacked the strength to remove it. Confessional integration had come too late and it had come too half-heartedly to truly counter-act Shleev and his separatism.

IX: A Step to Autocephaly? *Edinoverie* and the Church Council, 1917-18

Introduction

Revolution was breaking out in Russia, both in the state and the Church. On 3 July, the beginning of the July days insurrection, clergymen were meeting to prepare for the long anticipated Local Council of the Russian Orthodox Church, the first to be held in over two centuries. A small group of *edinovertsy* and missionaries had assembled in Moscow to discuss the meaning of the seventeenth century anathemas against the old rituals. It is difficult to imagine a topic more distant from the situation enveloping the country. The ritual re-evaluation was being played out once more but this time it was not accompanied by the scribbling of a theologian's pen or the chants of the liturgy. Now the backdrop was formed from the slogans of the proletariat and the shouting of soldiers. The noise from outside brought the conference to an abrupt close.¹ The Russian Revolution was encroaching on the century long task of defining *Edinoverie*'s relation to the Church.

Here I examine the last gasp of both confessional integration and separatist confessionalisation. They confronted each other in the sessions of the Church Council and battled to assert control over the shape that *Edinoverie* would take. There was no longer any debate about keeping the rules of Platon. They would be removed and replaced with a new settlement, one forged by the entire Church in council rather than by a lone Metropolitan and a group of priestly schismatics. But what would the new settlement look like? Would it embody the words of Subbotin and Pavel, an image of seamless unity within a single confession? Or would it further the cause of Shleev and institutionalise ritual difference so that one could talk of two confessions within a single Church? This was the question that confronted the participants of the Council and the reason matters became heated. Insults flew across the hall of the Patriarchal Palace as bishops, missionaries, theologians and *edinovertsy* hammered out a renovated compact between the old rituals and the new.²

The chaos in the Church and the collapse of the monarchy proffered Shleev an excellent opportunity to expand his confessional project. He was not just asking for one bishop but an entire episcopate of independent diocesan bishops. The administrative structures he

¹ GARF, f. R-3431, op. 1, d. 367, l. 38.

² Shleev in particular was routinely castigated for insulting other members of the Council. He was forced to apologise to N. M. Shakhov for referring to him as a Nikonian and Serafim (Aleksandrov) alleged Shleev had frequently told him that 'I have lost my conscience and forgotten God and His law.' See *Deianie*, vol. 6 (Moscow, 1918), LXXXII, pp. 144.

required would combine with this leadership model to cut all the Orthodox hierarchs entirely out of the management of *Edinoverie*. Only the Patriarch and the Church Council itself would join the *edinovertsy* to the rest of Russian Orthodoxy. The bases of the confessional scheme remained the same however. *Edinoverie* could restore to the Orthodox Church its lost piety but only if it maintained its rituals. Bishops and a host of other reforms were needed to defend these rituals and maintain a sufficiently zealous flock. The second National *Edinoverie* Congress met in July 1917 to formulate an unprecedentedly ambitious project of confessionalisation for the Local Council to vote on.

The expansiveness of Shleev's proposed reforms meant that the plenary sessions of the Church Council had to confront the oldest and most problematic of all the contradictions that lay behind *Edinoverie*. The original establishment of *Edinoverie* had required from the Orthodox Church a commitment to the ritual re-evaluation, that ritual was matter of secondary importance. The *edinovertsy* too had to accept this basic premise, especially since a 'correct' understanding of ritual was held to define the Orthodox confession. However, the reason *Edinoverie* existed is precisely because those who used the two fingered sign of the cross were so attached to this ritual form that a special compact was required in order to bring them back into the Church. That ritual preference had received further confirmation through institutionalisation. Shleev's project was the final stage of that process. Since Shleev and his supporters backed the separation of the *edinovertsy* into their own confession on the basis of ritual, had they accepted that ritual was a middling issue? If they had not, then surely their attitude to ritual was closer to the 'fanaticism' of the schismatics than Orthodox 'tolerance'. Neither Shleev nor even Verkhovskii had ever denied the idea of ritual tolerance but they equally made clear that ritual was massively important. Whilst they did not connect ritual with dogma, they certainly found a value almost as important to attach it to: Russian nationality itself. This was a problem with the idea of allowing two legitimate rituals in the Church and defining the Orthodox confession by its attitude to ritual.

We must always keep in mind the historical events that raged around the Council. Outside the very doors of the Council, the Provisional Government that had replaced the Tsar crumbled away and finally succumbed to Lenin's Bolsheviks, thus plunging Russia into a long and bloody civil war. A new Patriarch, Tikhon (Bellavin), was elected and enthroned on 21 November, putting a definitive end to the Synodal system. In the same sessions where the new rules of *Edinoverie* were hammered out, the Church heard reports of the

murder of Metropolitan Vladimir (Bogoiavlenskii) in Kiev on 7 February 1918 and the ever-worsening dispatches from the eastern front of the First World War. Of particular importance was the shocking news that the Georgian Orthodox Church had declared autocephaly and the Ukrainian one was close to following suit. It was because of this atmosphere in which the unity of Russian Orthodoxy seemed to be evaporating that Shleev's plans could be so easily stigmatised as a step to an autocephalous *Edinoverie* church.³ *Edinoverie* was not alien to political developments. The second Congress held discussions on how to adapt *Edinoverie* to the absence of its old monarchical benefactor. Modernity was knocking on the doors of the ancient Russian piety.

The *Edinoverie* Confession

First Steps

Little more than a month after the fall of Nicholas II, Shleev was using the new circumstances to petition the Synod for both another *Edinoverie* congress and a commission to organise it: 'the work of the commission will be organically connected with the proposals about reordering the administration of the Russian Church.'⁴ Noting the enormous lack of faith and 'anti-Christianism' that had now flooded Russia, Shleev proposed that *Edinoverie*, and the commission in particular, would be a bridge to join the Orthodox missionaries on one hand and the leaders of Old Belief on the other.⁵ He took the opportunity to dispatch to the Synod copies of the 1912 regulations of both the Council of Congresses.

Shleev was wasting no time in pursuing the goal that he had earlier failed to achieve. He was attempting to have the Synod set up an institutional framework which could manage and control all the *Edinoverie* parishes of Russia, whilst excluding Orthodox churchmen. Indeed, the one change to the 1912 regulations made this explicit. Previously the Council of Congresses' rules had provided that 'a bishop who blesses by the Old Believer rites'

³ For Georgian and Ukrainian autocephaly see P. Werth, "Georgian Autocephaly and the Ethnic Fragmentation of Orthodoxy," *Acta Slavica Iaponica* 23 (2003): 74–100, B. Bociurkiw, "The Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church, 1920-1930. A Case Study in Religious Modernization," in D. J. Dunn, ed., *Religions and Modernization in the Soviet Union* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1977), 310–47 and K. Fotiev, "Popytki ukrainskoi tserkovnoi avtokefalii v XX veke," in V. Chaplin *et al*, eds., *Pravoslavnaia tserkov' na Ukraine i v Pol'she v XX stoletii, 1917-1950 gg. Sbornik*. (Moscow, 1997), 7–86.

⁴ RGIA, f. 796, op. 204 VI otd. III st., d. 72, l. 1.

⁵ *Ibid.*, l. 2.

was to be the chair of the Council: now the clause stated that a *Edinoverie* bishop (or, if such was absent, a *Edinoverie* priest) was to head the organisational board.⁶

The new regulations were confirmed. On 4 May 1917, Andrei (Ukhtomskii) was appointed to be the chairman of a Synodal commission.⁷ The new commission was called 'the Council of the All-Russian Congresses of Orthodox Old Believers.' The use of the phrase 'Orthodox Old Believers' highlighted where its sympathies lay in the matter of *Edinoverie* reform. The people whom the bishop named as members of the commission not only included Shleev but also the entirety of his Petersburg retinue: his cousin Grigorii, his father Ioann, Prince Aleksei Ukhtomskii, Mikhail Dikov, Ivan Zverev and Grigorii Dribintsev.⁸ All of these men were long term associates of Shleev. Dikov, Zverev and Dribintsev in particular had been his diehard supporters since 1905. However, the new body did little. Its actions were limited to organising a second national congress⁹ and complaining that Orthodox interference in Moscow's Nikol'skii *Edinoverie* monastery had led 'to such an order of life that not one enthusiast for Orthodox Old Belief can be found there.'¹⁰ The suggested reform was only appointing *Edinoverie* abbots, thus definitively isolating the monasteries from Orthodox control.

That the commission was fully under the control of the Shleevian party did not go uncontested. On 1 September, the Moscow *edinovertsy* petitioned Metropolitan (soon to be Patriarch) Tikhon about the illegitimacy of the Council of Congresses. They argued that none of its new members had been elected and thus the Council had violated its own regulations. They therefore asked that Tikhon either abolish the Council of Congresses or exempt the Muscovites from its control.¹¹

Formulating a Plan

The second National *Edinoverie* Congress, held between 23 and 28 July in Nizhnii Novgorod, was a different affair to its predecessor. Gone was the pomp and ceremony that had greeted the opening of that congress. Andrei (Ukhtomskii) and Lavrentii (Kniazev) of Balakhninsk were the only Orthodox prelates in attendance. No government

⁶ Ibid., l. 2ob.

⁷ Ibid., l. 5.

⁸ Ibid., l. 6-6ob.

⁹ RGIA, f. 796, op. 204 VI otd. III st., d. 92, l. 6-6ob.

¹⁰ RGIA, f. 796, op. 204 VI otd. III st., d. 72, l. 15.

¹¹ GARF, f. R-3431, op. 1, d. 365, l. 75-75ob. The request was part of a wider protest by the Muscovites against their exclusion from the subcommittees of the Local Church Council. They dropped their complaint once they were allowed to attend.

ministers were there.¹² Nor were there any Orthodox missionaries in attendance to create a ruckus. Previous congresses had utilised their opening and closing ceremonies to symbolically represent the unity between the Church and the *edinovertsy*. On this occasion, the ceremonies were designed to broadcast Shleev's confessionalisation project.

In his opening speech, Shleev turned to look at *Edinoverie*'s historical task. This was nothing less than the salvation of Russia. He referred to the tale of Koz'ma Minin, the Nizhnii Novgorod merchant who had famously rallied Russians in the Time of Troubles by calling on their Orthodox faith. That faith had been lost by the majority of people but had been kept alive by the *edinovertsy*. Thus 'they [the Russian people] turn to us, the Old Believers, we have found the salvation of the dying Motherland, they grasp at us for that fragment of the old Russian life which we have defended.'¹³ Here Shleev was giving a new twist to an old theme. The ancient piety of the *edinovertsy* would not only revive religious life but also save Russia from the Germans. This symbolic connection between *Edinoverie* and Minin was reinforced at the closing of the congress when a *pankhida* (requiem) was held in honour of the long dead hero.¹⁴ The *edinovertsy* appropriated a key narrative of modern nationhood, the story of Minin's victory over foreign invaders, to bring themselves into the very heart of Russia's past, present, and future.¹⁵

The *edinovertsy* also examined the problems of political turmoil and the arrival of a government that was taking the first steps to separation of church and state.¹⁶ G. D. Dribintsev severely castigated the Provisional Government's promulgation of freedom of conscience: the new law 'brings among the Orthodox believers great confusion and temptation: that it threatens the church with great depredations – this for me does not lie under any doubt.'¹⁷ Ironically, the critics of the old Synodal order were now feeling apprehensive about challenging other faiths on equal terms.

¹² A telegram of greetings from ober-procurator Prince L'vov was the closest the secular authorities came to taking an interest.

¹³ *Vtoroi Vserossiiskii s'ezd pravoslavnykh staroobriadtsev (edinoveritsev) v N. Novgorode 23-28 iulia 1917 goda.* (Petrograd, 1917), 20.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 60.

¹⁵ The war also proffered the *edinovertsy* the opportunity to act as protectors of the Orthodox East: the congress petitioned the government to take measures to defend Orthodox relics and buildings in Istanbul and Trebizond, both of which were occupied by allied troops. *Ibid.*, 78.

¹⁶ For the reaction of the Church to this new situation, see A. V. Sokolov, "Vremennoe pravitel'stvo i Russkaia pravoslavnaia tserkov': 1917 god" (Kand. diss., Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi pedagogicheskii universitet imeni A. I. Gertsena, 2002).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 64.

However, the *edinovertsy* also recognised that the new atmosphere of political freedom could present opportunities. Shleev proposed the formation of an Union of Orthodox Old Believers for the achievement of ‘political aims.’ If such a union was not to be instituted, then a block with the Old Believers might also be considered.¹⁸ It is significant that the *edinovertsy* did not presume to rely on the political clout of the Orthodox Church. Indeed, when it came to make alliances, Shleev proposed the Old Believers and said nothing of the Church.¹⁹

However, defining the relationship of *Edinoverie* to the new Russian republic was of secondary importance. The main duty of the congress was to confirm the new rules of *Edinoverie*. The new ‘thesis’ was to replace the rules of Platon. As with the old system, the aim was the regulation and codification of relations between the Orthodox and the *edinovertsy*.²⁰ The first point proffered a definition of *Edinoverie*: ‘*Edinoverie* society is the totality of Orthodox Old Believer parishes in the bosom of the Orthodox Church who live by their special church customs and daily habits (*bytovym ukladom*).’²¹ This was far more concrete than Platon had ever been, placing *Edinoverie* squarely within the Church whilst also ensuring that the old rites were considered a marker of identity. Point fourteen finally and conclusively abolished the prohibitions of Platon against conversion between *Edinoverie* and Orthodoxy. Points fifteen and seventeen added some new regulations. At times of mutual service, the liturgy was to be performed in the style established by agreement and *Edinoverie* children in Orthodox schools (and vice versa) were to have their ritual preferences respected.²²

However, most of the document was spent defining the new organisational structures of *Edinoverie*. Long gone was Shleev’s scheme for a single *Edinoverie* bishop under the Synod. In its place now stood a plan for a full hierarchy of *Edinoverie* bishops that would parallel the Orthodox structure. These two hierarchies would be joined under whatever form of supreme church administration the Local Council decided upon. Shleev and Andrei emphasised that Orthodox bishops would not be excluded from the new *Edinoverie* dioceses where overlap occurred. Since ‘*Edinoverie* and Orthodox diocesan bishops, composing the high hierarchy of the united Russian Orthodox Church, are

¹⁸ Ibid., 65.

¹⁹ However, he did meet some opposition: some argued that the Council of Congresses was such a union whilst others noted that the Old Believers, contrary to Shleev’s claims, had not yet formed a political union. Ibid.

²⁰ See the appendix for full translation.

²¹ Ibid., 79.

²² Ibid., 80–81.

engaged in continual canonical communion,' both bishops would be able to visit those parishes of the other which lay within their geographical jurisdiction and serve the liturgy in their churches.²³ However, this was ceremonial, rather than administrative, unity.

The new system looked thus. *Edinoverie* bishops were subordinated to the highest church authorities. These bishops were the chairs of diocesan councils that existed to assist them in their duties and these same councils elected the bishops for confirmation by the Church. Laymen would have a majority since the number of lay deputies present was to be twice that of the clerical cohort.²⁴ A parish council standing 'at the head of the parish' would elect their own clerical personnel and deputies to the diocesan congresses. The Council of Congresses would, presumably, link all of the diocesan councils together. Its chair would become the *de facto* senior prelate, the link between the higher Church administration and the *edinovertsy*. Taken altogether, the new rules abolished what was left of Platon's barricades between *Edinoverie* and Orthodoxy whilst at the same time creating an administrative structure that would effectively separate the Orthodox from the *Edinoverie* in institutional terms.

Before the new rules could be voted upon, the congress had to give its consent to the existence of a *Edinoverie* hierarchy. Almost all agreed with Vinogradov that 'without a bishop, we cannot renew ourselves, without a bishop we cannot even exist', 'he is as necessary to us as air.'²⁵ The measure on prelates was passed with only one deputy from Kostroma voting against.²⁶ The single vote against provoked a hysterical resignation threat from Shleev. The protocols depart from their dry transcription to note the victorious mood that followed this near unanimous accord: the congress sang a hymn in celebration and tears filled the eyes of the deputies.²⁷

The next matter to be attended to was the election of candidates for presentation before the Church Council and the formation of dioceses from the scattered *Edinoverie* parishes

²³ Equally, the Orthodox bishops were not to be excluded from election of *Edinoverie* bishops. In the diocesan councils that were to be held for this purpose, Orthodox bishops could also attend with permission of the high church administration. Ibid., 79-80.

²⁴ Ibid., 80.

²⁵ Ibid., 42-43.

²⁶ Ibid., 48.

²⁷ F. A. Vitov argued that the new rules 'on the one hand widen the rights of the Orthodox Old Believers but, on the other, some paragraphs limit these rights (summoning us to unity with the Orthodox Church and whilst undermining it). Presently, it is desirable, necessary and opportune to widen rights and not to limit them.' He also argued that all *edinovertsy* needed the opportunity to vote on the new rules. Ibid., 43.

of Russia. Ten dioceses were decided upon.²⁸ The size of each of these planned dioceses was staggering: the Petrograd diocese alone contained ten existing Orthodox dioceses, spreading as far north as Petrozavodsk and as far west as Riga.²⁹ Their enormous dimensions pointed to the fact that *edinovertsy* populations were so small that dioceses had to be vast in order to create a flock of a sufficient size to support a bishop and his administration.³⁰

After approving Shleev's thesis, the congress dedicated a substantial amount of time to discussing practical issues of *Edinoverie* religious life: the liturgy, singing, education of the clergy, and the establishment of schools. The discussion of these issues was marked by the desire to confessionalise *Edinoverie*, by the desire to maintain and strengthen all those aspects of *Edinoverie* that distinguished it from Orthodoxy and also reform and discipline the behaviour of the flock. G. I. Simagin condemned the disorder in the *Edinoverie* liturgy: 'You receive the impression of an egregious muddle, a lack of definition, a kind of chaos, the confusion of the old ritual with the new...' ³¹ He noted several violations in particular that required immediate correction: arbitrariness in the number of prostrations made, the closing and opening of the iconostasis doors did not correspond with the dictate of the regulations, children were being named 'following the requirements of fashion' (and not in the memory of saints), and couples were not covering their heads when they were married.³² Simagin also lectured at length on how women dressed in church. Even the fact that women came to church with uncovered heads and figure-hugging dresses had a missionary significance. The Old Believer, coming to the *Edinoverie* church and 'seeing women with uncovered heads or in bonnets and dresses of a most tempting form' would doubt that grace dwelled in the *Edinoverie*

²⁸ Petrograd, Chernigov, Kherson, Moscow, Nizhnii Novgorod, Kazan', Samara, Ekaterinburg, Tiumen' and Ural'sk.

²⁹ For reasons which were not explained, Arkhangel'sk was attached to the diocese centred on Moscow. *Vtoroi Vserossiiskii s'ezd pravoslavnykh staroobriadtsev*, 23.

³⁰ Nor was diocese size the only problem. It was difficult to find suitable individuals. Distinguished *Edinoverie* priests and monks were few and far between. This resulted in the fact that of sixteen candidates selected, nine of them were Orthodox bishops. Shleev even had to resort to forwarding the application of his own father, Ioann Grigor'evich, despite his advanced age. The final list was: Shleev, Antonii (Khrapovitskii), Aleksei Ukhtomskii, Afansii (rector of the Kazan Ecclesiastical Academy), Gavril of Barnaul, Gavril of Akkermansi, Prokopii of Elisavetgrad, Vasilii Prilutskii (professor at the Kiev Ecclesiastical Academy), Anastasii (rector of the Petrograd Academy), abbot Iov of Saratov, Boris (a suffragan of Kazan), Kornilii of Rybinsk, Iosif of Uglich, Father Ioann Fedorovich Veretennikov, Ioann Grigor'evich Shleev and Andrei (Ukhtomskii). Professor Prilutskii withdrew his candidacy the next day. *Ibid.*, 58.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 100–101.

³² *Ibid.*, 101.

church because of the lack of discipline.³³ Simagin was proposing the idea of subjecting the bodies of parishioners to a new level of discipline through the means of ritual, with the intent to create the necessary level of religious piety. Women in particular were the subjects of such disciplining schemes because of the threat that their sexuality posed to the purity of *Edinoverie* zeal and also because of their presumed weakness for voguish western fashions.

Standardising ritual performance and increasing *Edinoverie* institutionalisation continued apace. In an attempt to finally give uniform guidelines on ritual observance, the congress ordered that a short prayer book was to be published by the Moscow typography containing diagrams about how to make the sign of the cross and other aspects of *Edinoverie* prayer.³⁴ The church elder N. N. Durandin made a similar move in regards to *Edinoverie* singing. He proposed (and even offered to fund) the publication of a collection of church hymns printed with the hook notes and western notations parallel to each other.³⁵ A 'theological school' in Moscow specifically for the teaching of *Edinoverie* priests was also considered. Perhaps the ultimate intention was to create an institution primarily directed at providing educated candidates for the *Edinoverie* episcopate.³⁶

Newer methods were put forward for shaping *Edinoverie* into a distinct and pious confession. Shleev, for instance, briefly proposed a *Edinoverie* journal that would be sent to all parishes, replacing the diocesan newspapers published by the Orthodox bishops.³⁷ Thus, *Edinoverie* parishes would be made distinct even in their reading material and also isolated from the general news occurring in the Orthodox dioceses coterminous with their own. Finally it was proposed to establish a statistical review of Russia's *edinovertsy* so as to know *Edinoverie*'s material and spiritual strength and assist in forging it into a 'general union.'³⁸ The questionnaire contained thirty-five questions aimed at compiling information on every aspect of each parish.³⁹ Perhaps the most important section was that dedicated to gathering data on the way in which the *Edinoverie* liturgy was conducted. It asked about whether the new or the old books were used in the liturgy, what form of singing was used, whether novelties had been introduced into the liturgy, and how long

³³ Ibid., 105.

³⁴ Ibid., 24.

³⁵ Ibid., 62.

³⁶ The fact that Shleev discussed this school at the same time as candidates to the episcopate were being elected makes this probable. Ibid., 60.

³⁷ Ibid., 75.

³⁸ Ibid., 94.

³⁹ Areas of enquiry included the clergy, parishioners, schools and charitable institutions present in each community.

the liturgy lasted and whether the clergy preached.⁴⁰ If a distinctive form of *Edinoverie* religious life was to be maintained, then this kind of systematic information gathering was absolutely essential. This planned census, an intensive and thorough mechanism of surveillance, was therefore a central aspect of asserting control over church discipline.

Shleev had no difficulty passing all of the measures that he backed and thus could present his plans to the local Council as representative of the voice of all Russia's *edinovertsy*. Had any of these resolutions ever been fully carried out and realised, then a very different *Edinoverie* would have emerged after the turmoil of the Russian Revolution. Equipped with a hierarchy parallel to that of the Orthodox Church, the *edinovertsy* would have been almost wholly separated from the Orthodox Church on an institutional level. A range of lesser measures would have furthered this. The creation of a 'theological school' in Moscow might have ultimately provided the *Edinoverie* with an episcopate whose place and form of education was distinct from that received by the Orthodox hierarchs. The replacement of the Orthodox diocesan newspapers with a single *Edinoverie* publication would have further contributed to a sense of difference and perhaps even isolation from the Orthodox of the local region. Further, had the survey of *Edinoverie* parishes ever been completed, it would have provided the leaders of the movement with an invaluable tool in forging a singular *Edinoverie* liturgy for all Russian parishes, eliminating the adaptations made both from Orthodox sources and from conflicts within the treasured old texts. This would have been aided with the publication of Shleev's proposed prayer book and the hymnbook offered by Durandin. However, for the plan to become reality the consent of the Local Church Council was required.

Platon Replaced

The Local Council of the Russian Orthodox Church opened on 28 August 1917 and continued its work until 20 September 1918. The plenary sessions dealing with *Edinoverie* occurred between 7 and 16 February. However, these meetings were only the conclusion of a much longer process of negotiation and drafting. This had had been undertaken in the Pre-Conciliar Council, which was held in June and July 1917, and in editorial committees that sat continuously alongside the plenary sessions. These also functioned as a secretariat.⁴¹ *Edinoverie* itself had two such committees dedicated to it,

⁴⁰ *Vtoroi Vserossiiskii s'ezd*, 85.

⁴¹ The committees of the Pre-Conciliar Council were made up of small groups of experts who numbered no more than four or five people. The *Edinoverie* editorial committees, which were most active between 20 August and 10 December, were larger: they were often attended by 50 to 80 individuals, some with voting rights, others as guests.

one formulating the replacement to the rules of Platon and the other dealing with the anathemas. Whilst the Council theoretically had 564 members, the voting numbers in the *Edinoverie* plenary sessions suggest that no more than 200 participants were involved in this work, marking the rather niche status of *Edinoverie*. It is useful to keep these administrative structures in mind, since the debates in the Pre-Conciliar Council and the editorial committees were often referred to in the plenary sessions.⁴²

Here I limit myself purely to the work done on the new settlement between *Edinoverie* and Orthodoxy. The anathemas had also been a topic of discussion, both in the *Edinoverie* congress and the preparatory meetings for the Council.⁴³ However, they became stuck in the purgatory of the editorial committee and never made it to the plenary sessions. The debate was so intense that no consensus could be reached and so the chair of the sessions kept proroguing the assembly. The group met for a final time in June 1918 by which time it was too late to send anything to a Council that was coming rapidly to its close. Since it came to no definitive resolution and the arguments were repetitions of those that churchmen had been having since the 1870s, I will not restate them here.⁴⁴

By the time the plenary sessions discussing *Edinoverie* began on 7 February, Shleev had good reason to be optimistic. The editorial committee had submitted a proposal that kept every strand of the confessionalisation project on the table.⁴⁵ However, there were three facts that undermined any sanguinity that Shleev maintained. The first was that his success in the editorial committee was very much reliant on Metropolitan Antonii (Khrapovitskii's) support: that one of the candidates for the Patriarchal throne consistently backed him was no small boon. However, when the plenary session opened, Antonii was in Kiev, prevented from returning to Moscow by the chaotic situation in a region engulfed by the German army and civil war. The man chosen to replace him was

⁴² For more on the Council and its structures, see C. Evtuhov, "The Church in the Russian Revolution: Arguments for and against Restoring the Patriarchate at the Church Council of 1917-1918," *Slavic Review* 50 (1991): 497-511; E. E. Roslof, *Red Priests: Renovationism, Russian Orthodoxy, and Revolution, 1905-1946* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 16-26; J. W. Cunningham, *The Gates of Hell. The Great Sobor of the Russian Orthodox Church, 1917-1918.*, eds. K. and G. Dyrud (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 21-38; P. G. Rogoznyi, *Tserkovnaia revoliutsiia 1917 goda. Vyshee dukhovenstvo Rossiiskoi tserkvi v bor'be za vlast' v eparkhiakh posle fevral'skoi revoliutsii* (St. Petersburg, 2008).

⁴³ *Vtoroi Vserossiiskii s"ezd*, 32-34 and GARF f. R-3431, op. 1, d. 367.

⁴⁴ For a thorough discussion, see A. Kravetskii, "K istorii sniatii kliatv na donikonovskie obriady," *Bogoslovskie trudy* 39 (2004): 320-325.

⁴⁵ It has been a close run thing, however. The measure for a *Edinoverie* episcopate was passed by only two votes: see GARF, f. R-3431, op. 1, d. 365, l. 14ob-15. The only major damage done to Shleev's plans was that the number of new dioceses that had been proposed by the second congress had been whittled down to five when it emerged that there were significant doubts over whether there were sufficient funds in many of the regions suggested.

bishop Serafim of Chelabinsk. Before being raised to the episcopate, he had been the missionary Dmitrii Aleksandrov, one of Shleev's most ferocious and acerbic enemies. This led to a bizarre situation where one of the two speakers supporting the tabled proposals was one of its most die-hard critics. Arsenii (Straditskii), the chair of the sessions, was also not well-disposed towards Shleev.

The second related to the discussions that Shleev and Andrei (Ukhtomskii) had held with the priestly Old Believers in May and June 1917. Whilst these were ordered by the Synod, the fact that had been secret had caused the suspicions of the missionaries to flare.⁴⁶ Already Shleev had had to categorically deny that he had said 'save us, we are dying' to the schismatics.⁴⁷ Even the *edinovertsy* had been nervous about the reports, with one participant at the Nizhnii Novgorod congress asking whether he had 'with tears implored the Belaia Krinitsa hierarchs to accept him into communion.'⁴⁸ The missionaries seized on these suspicions to routinely beat Shleev's party.

The third, issue related to rumours about the intentions of Shleev and Andrei. Did they want to declare *Edinoverie* as an autocephalous church? Evidence emerged that Andrei had made some very inopportune comments in the Pre-Conciliar Council on 19 June:

an independent church of the old ritual is necessary: even if there are anomalies in a canonical sense, it is impossible to sacrifice the advantage of the Church because of the letter of the canons: what is necessary for the Church must be canonical. With time the aforementioned anomalies will be smoothed out if Old Belief and the Orthodox Church are not to be gnawed away by two ulcers - in Old Belief, presbyterianism and in Orthodoxy, the mission (it is necessary to replace the word missionary with something else). Even if we violate some canons, by it we will accomplish a great deed.⁴⁹

It is clear why such a statement angered the missionaries so much. Not only did Andrei consider them an 'ulcer' on the Orthodox Church but he directly stated that creating a *Edinoverie* episcopate would be nothing other than forming a new and independent Church. When Serafim (Aleksandrov) read out the protocol on 28 September, he

⁴⁶ That Shleev had told Andrei not to discuss the meetings with the Old Believers certainly caused consternation at the Fifth Missionary Congress: see I. Aivazov, ed., *Deianniia piatogo Vserossiiskogo missionerskogo s'ezda* (Moscow, 1917), 30. Andrei later claimed that he had been given permission by Tikhon to begin these discussions. M. Zelenogorskii, *Zhizn' i trudy arkhiepiskopa Andreia (kniazia Ukhtomskogo)*, 2nd ed. (Moscow, 2011), 279.

⁴⁷ GARF, f. R-3431, op. 1, d. 367, l. 35ob.

⁴⁸ *Vtoroi Vserossiiskii s'ezd*, 30.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, l. 33ob.

declaimed that if the record was true, ‘I cannot work further in the section on *Edinoverie* and I will have to leave from it because I find the aforementioned comments to be not only anti-canonical but also direct heresy.’⁵⁰ Andrei and Shleev denied that he had ever said such words and complained of conspiracy: the protocols had been doctored. If Andrei did say this, then it was an act of direst folly since it substantiated every claim that Orthodox missionaries had ever made regarding Shleev’s confessionalisation plans. It is impossible to say what truly happened on 19 June but the rumours certainly helped Shleev’s opposition no end. In an atmosphere where the Ukrainian and Georgian churches were in the process of declaring autocephaly, the missionaries could claim that Shleev and Andrei were trying to do the exact same thing.⁵¹ The protocols were referred to time and time again to undermine Shleev’s credibility. As A. G. Al’bitskii put it, ‘giving the *edinovertsy* special bishops is a step to the autocephaly of the *edinovertsy*.’⁵²

The Victory of the Ritual Re-evaluation

Shleev opened the first session on *Edinoverie* by arguing that the revival of religiosity in Russia was necessary to save it from collapse and thus it would be ‘criminal’ for the Council to refuse the requests of the *edinovertsy*. To revive piety, *Edinoverie* needed reform. Reform meant consigning the rules of the Platon to the dustbin and further institutionalisation.⁵³ He condemned the five year waiting period for conversion from Orthodoxy to *Edinoverie*, which ‘serves as proof that *Edinoverie* officially are not considered to be the true flock of the Church but are in the position of the Uniates.’⁵⁴ *Edinoverie*’s status compared to other religions was a repeated theme in Shleev’s later speeches: the limitations of the rules of Platon meant ‘that we are worse than schismatics and Muslims, worse than all who confess other religions.’⁵⁵ He concluded that, if the

⁵⁰ GARF, f. R-3431, op. 1, d. 365, l. 62ob-63.

⁵¹ The sheer stupidity of such comments at this crucial juncture is one reason to believe the claim that the protocols had been tampered with. There is nothing to suggest that Shleev ever contemplated autocephaly. Even Griniakin, a bitter and irreconcilable foe of the Petersburg priest, had to concede that point. Equally, Andrei had never signed the protocols. Only Orthodox participants had done so: they numbered seven people and included bishop Arsenii (Straditskii), Griniakin, a archimandrite and four theological professors. Therefore either Andrei left before the protocols were signed in order to maintain plausible deniability (perhaps he realised just how badly he had misspoke) or there was a conspiracy among very senior members of the Orthodox Church to discredit the idea of a *Edinoverie* episcopate. Both are difficult to believe but it must also be remembered that Andrei did, in 1925, try to forge a legitimate Old Believer hierarchy with the assistance of a *Edinoverie* bishop. Was the statement a slip up where Andrei let his real intentions show? If so, Shleev had chosen his ally very poorly indeed.

⁵² *Deianiia*, 6:30.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 6:15.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 6:16.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 6:84.

Church still regarded *Edinoverie* as a temporary institution, then it was necessary to allow it die a natural death. If not, then new rules were required to protect its religious life and give it an order that would allow it to live.⁵⁶

After a suitable interval, Serafim got up to deliver a blistering broadside. He compared Shleev's project to order no. 1, the proclamation by the Petrograd Soviet to the Russian army that called for them to ignore the orders of the Provisional Government if they contradicted those of the Soviet: 'If order no. 1 introduced disorganisation into our army and we are now living through hard days thanks to it, then we will introduce the same into our church life if we accept this plan.'⁵⁷ The idea of having two episcopates in the Church was compared to the presence of two civil authorities in the aftermath of the February Revolution and the anarchic results of the latter would be repeated by the enactment of the former. Symbolically, Shleev was also linked to the socialist revolutionaries of the Soviet. All of this led Serafim to conclude that the document was nothing more than an attempt to gain autocephaly.⁵⁸ Consequently he demanded that Shleev's plan be rejected entirely. Serafim's speech was thus a fervent restatement of confessional integration. He reiterated that Orthodoxy and *Edinoverie* were part of the same of the confession and the same Church: 'the Orthodox Church, as a mother, considers them [the *edinovertsy*] its right hand and the Orthodox the left and it does more for the right than for the left.'⁵⁹

The lectures of the two elected speakers set up the issue of debate in very precise terms. It was about whether to enact confessional integration or separatist confessionalisation. The disputes frequently trod over the same ground as those between 1905 and 1912. The major point of contention was the bishop question. Indeed, clause two of the proposed settlement, that which established the *Edinoverie* episcopate, consumed several whole sessions whilst most of the other seventeen points were passed with barely any discussion. The outlines of the argument were predictable. Shleev and his party backed an episcopate, most of the Orthodox and some *edinovertsy* backed *Edinoverie* suffragan bishops, one or two of the theologians suggested chorbishops, and Serafim adamantly refused to countenance the idea of *Edinoverie* prelates at all. For the most part, the lines of reasoning ran in pre-established patterns. There were appeals and counter appeals to

⁵⁶ Ibid., 6:16.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 6:24.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 6:26.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 6:25.

the canons about the sovereignty of a bishop in his diocese and discussions of the mission utility of *Edinoverie* prelates.

At the heart of the issue was whether difference in ritual could justify such an expansive division between Orthodoxy and *Edinoverie*. Archimandrite Ilarion (Troitskii) put the question succinctly: ‘Can ritual be a basis for the creation of special hierarchy?’⁶⁰ If the Council said yes, then it would repeat the mistakes of the seventeenth century. It would grant ritual an importance that it did not possess. The councils of that century had attempted to freeze the ritual life of the Orthodox Church but this was impossible. Ritual is a ‘sphere where everything lives, develops, and changes.’⁶¹ However, the *edinovertsy* were now attempting to continue this tradition of freezing ritual forms by institutionalising them under an episcopate, the sole justification for which was that it existed to protect the old rituals. Protophierarch Al’bitskii also discussed the meaning of ritual and their relevance for the current debate. The Old Believers assigned an exclusive importance to the matter of ritual: ‘when the Old Believer says that the two fingers are the same as the three fingers, he has already stopped being an Old Believer, his Old Belief has lost its vital force.’⁶² Thus, the moment that the *edinovertsy* had recognised the validity of the three fingered sign of the cross, they had ceased being Old Believers and ritual changes had begun to creep into their liturgy. They had begun down the road to integration with the Orthodox Church.⁶³ The intrusion of Orthodox liturgical practices into *Edinoverie* churches that Shleev so despised were in fact a sign that his views were out of date and out of sync with his co-religionists. Many *edinovertsy* had already come to the realisation that ritual was relatively insignificant and so did not share in his belief that ritual should be the basis for an entirely separate episcopate.

Such arguments could reach extremes. N. D. Kuznetsov welcomed the idea that *Edinoverie* would die without an independent episcopate: ‘through such a death, the *edinovertsy* will be purified of their excessive adherence to the old rituals and the ancient customs of life which now often darkens their religious horizons and they will be reborn as members of the united Ecumenical Apostolic Church with wider church consciousness.’⁶⁴ The death foretold by Shleev would thus be the death of the schismatic *Edinoverie*. Those who were reborn would be the true *edinovertsy*, purged of the ritual

⁶⁰ Ibid., 6:44.

⁶¹ Ibid., 6:44.

⁶² *Deianiia*, 1918, 6:63.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 6:101.

intolerance that was little more than an unfortunate remnant of their time in the schism. Kuznetsov thought that destroying *Edinoverie* and its institutionalisation of ritual difference would be the best way of confirming the logical outcome of the ritual re-evaluation. The *edinovertsy* would finally become conscious of ritual as an indifferent matter and thus become truly Orthodox, sharing the ritual tolerance that defined the Orthodox confession and setting it apart from the schism. Kuznetsov imagined wiping the slate clean, burning all those divisions that the rules of Metropolitan Platon had fostered to the ground. Shleev's cousin Grigorii reacted angrily: 'for such orators, perhaps it would be better if there was no *Edinoverie* at all?'⁶⁵

In making such an argument, Ilarion, Al'bitskii and Kuznetsov were turning Shleev's claim that a episcopate was necessary to defend the ritual peculiarities of *Edinoverie* on its head. Why was such a measure necessary when the *edinovertsy* had already conceded upon joining the Church that ritual was a matter of secondary importance? Indeed, the argument went further than this. Those *edinovertsy* who were seeking to create an episcopate solely on the basis of the ritual difference were returning to the ritual exclusivity of the Old Believers and rejecting the tolerance on which their unity with the Orthodox Church was predicated. Thus, the *edinovertsy* devotion to ritual and the desire to institutionalise it meant that they were leaving behind the Orthodox view on ritual diversity and returning to their Old Believer roots. True *Edinoverie*, much like true Orthodoxy, had to be open to ritual change and an episcopate was a useless attempt to freeze rituals in time. Kuznetsov made this transparent later when business turned to changing the name of *Edinoverie* to Orthodox Old Belief:

The understanding itself of Old Belief contains in it a sign of a kind of excessive devotion to the old ritual. However, ritual in itself has secondary importance in the question about belonging to the Church. What aim is behind the proposed name? If it underlines that Old Believers can be Orthodox, then this is understandable. If it points to the fact that in the Church the Old Believers present a special community, then this is meant to remark on the possibility of division in the church according to secondary symbols and this already does not correspond to the nature of the Church and therefore is not only excessive but in some cases can even be harmful.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Ibid., 6:109.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 7: 97.

Shleev responded to these arguments by making a distinction between the words ‘ritual’ (*obriad*) and ‘way of life’ (*uklad*). Tracing the meaning of the latter word to the verb *ukladyvat*’ (to arrange, to pack), Shleev postulated that the word meant not the ‘way of life’ in terms of things that it contained (like the rituals) but rather a person’s relationship to those things.⁶⁷ When using the term in reference to *Edinoverie*, it pointed not to the rituals and customs themselves but the way in which the *edinovertsy* related to them. It was argued that the *Edinoverie* attitude towards ritual was a conscious and disciplined one, exactly the opposite of the careless and fanatical devotion ascribed to them by Shleev’s opponents. This made the *edinovertsy* distinct from most Orthodox whose mechanical execution of ritual ultimately made them far more vulnerable to accusations of ceremonialism.⁶⁸

The argument was clumsy. Etymology was unlikely to convince where theology had failed. Shleev was trying to shift categories to stump his opponents. It was not the rituals themselves that made *Edinoverie* valuable but rather a strict and disciplined attitude to rituals. Firstly this led them to a proper appreciation of the rituals and secondly turned the rituals into the source of that particular form of popular Russian piety that required the protection afforded by an episcopate. Ultimately, the argument was ham fisted because there was little Shleev could do to defend himself against accusations that devotion to pre-Nikonian ritual was the basis of his entire scheme. He could not undo the Gordian knot. *Edinoverie* was a phenomenon that *could exist* because the significance of ritual had been downgraded but *existed* because only by the preservation of the pre-Nikonian rite could the Old Believers be drawn back into the Church.

Others offered different arguments. Professor M. N. Vasil’evskii confessed his utter incomprehension that an episcopate on the grounds of ritual difference was something unprecedented and would ‘exaggerate and revalue the significance of ritual in the Church.’⁶⁹ The Church had already solved this issue when it allowed the *edinovertsy* to have their own priests and monasteries. The difference between rituals had already been institutionalised so how would it be more problematic if bishops were added to the mix?⁷⁰ Vasil’evskii thought that institutionalisation had already occurred and so it made precious little difference if it continued. Equally the presence of such institutionalisation had not

⁶⁷ Ibid., 6:117.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 6:97. This was surprising given that Vasil’evskii had been an opponent in the Pre-Conciliar Council sessions of June 1917. See GARF, f. R3431, op. 1, d. 365, l. 34ob.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

led the Church to turn against ritual tolerance as a value. F. S. Bogoliubov denigrated the indifference that the Council members seemed to be showing to ritual. It was ‘a novelty that people have begun to express themselves against the importance of church ritual in the name of Orthodox theology.’⁷¹ Bogoliubov looked at the national significance of ritual. He told a story from the works of Nikolai Karamzin about a Dutchman living in Switzerland who had never forgotten about his native land because of his preservation of national customs.⁷² Thus the *edinovertsy* deserved bishops to protect their old Russian rituals. This was an emphasis on the national and popular qualities of the pre-Nikonian rites. By connecting rite with popular nationhood, Bogoliubov, like Shleev, could justify the importance attached to liturgical matters.

The exchange of opinions got to the core of the problem of *Edinoverie*. The ritual re-evaluation had allowed it to exist. Without it, the Orthodox could never have conceded that more than one form of ritual could be allowed in the Church. This in turn had led to a crisis of confessional identity whereby ritual could no longer distinguish between Old Belief and Orthodoxy. The response had been to turn the ritual re-evaluation itself into a marker of Orthodox confessional belonging. To be Orthodox, one had to have a proper understanding of the relative insignificance of ritual. However, the act of creating *Edinoverie* necessarily meant conceding that the pre-Nikonian rites were so important to the Old Believers that they were willing to enter unity only if the rites were preserved. Platon’s rules had thus institutionalised ritual. The participants of the Council divided along the two sides of this paradox. For the Orthodox, it was about trying to stop any reform that would further institutionalise ritual. For Shleev, there was no good answer. He ultimately could only justify his confessionalisation project on the grounds that ritual was so important it needed to be protected.

The Fate of *Edinoverie*

When it came to voting on the *Edinoverie* episcopate, Shleev saw the writing on the wall. There was no way the Council was going to pass his proposition for an episcopate, the opposition was too strong.⁷³ He thus suggested a new formula for point two of his thesis, that if the diocesan bishop or the Council believed that there were sufficient numbers of *Edinoverie* parishes in a diocese, then they could appoint a special *Edinoverie* bishop who would manage the *Edinoverie* parishes whilst being subordinated to the diocesan

⁷¹ Ibid., 6:65.

⁷² Ibid., 6:66.

⁷³ Ibid., 6:123.

prelate.⁷⁴ This was a colossal u-turn. Since 1905, when Shleev had told V. G. Senatov ‘[the idea of] suffragan *Edinoverie* bishops is a still-born child,’ he had argued against them.⁷⁵ Now Shleev was essentially asking for suffragan bishops in everything but name.⁷⁶

Regardless of how shocking the sudden change of heart was, it was undoubtedly wise. When the vote came on the original formula, it was comprehensively defeated. Shleev’s new proposal was accepted by the narrowest of narrow margins: 95 in favour, 92 against.⁷⁷ Uproar followed. A voice from the crowd demanded a recount, Serafim insisted on the attachment of a dissenting opinion to the protocols and P. A. Astrov declared that such a matter could not be decided by so slim a majority.⁷⁸ Nevertheless, the vote was conclusive: the *edinovertsy* now had bishops.

Serafim did not take defeat lying down. As every article relating to the bishops came before the Council, he tried to have them amended so that there was no explicit reference to ‘*Edinoverie* bishops.’ On each occasion he recommended the phrasing ‘bishops to whose instruction *Edinoverie* parishes are subordinated.’ On each occasion, he was only narrowly beaten. For instance, when it came to voting on point four, the paragraph which gave the right of both Orthodox and *Edinoverie* bishops to visit each other’s parishes for the sake of constant inter-communion, Serafim lost by only two votes.⁷⁹ Serafim made his reasons crystal clear. When he tried to amend point five using the same phrasing, a voice shouted from the crowd that the two formulations were one and the same. Serafim responded abruptly that ‘they are not one and the same. I do not and will not recognise *Edinoverie* bishops.’⁸⁰ Besides his evident dislike of the very concept of *Edinoverie* bishops, he was unsure as to what they actually were or how they related to the Orthodox prelate: ‘What is a *Edinoverie* bishop? Is he a suffragan or independent or something else?’⁸¹ His ultimate answer was simple. The *Edinoverie* suffragan bishop was to have no

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ S. Shleev, “K voprosu: kakoi episkop nuzhen edinoveriiu?,” *Missionerskoe obozrenie* no. 11 (1905): 219.

⁷⁶ Indeed the word ‘suffragan bishop’ (*vikarnyi episkop*) was deliberately not used since Shleev argued that its Latin origins would provide a ‘temptation’ for the *edinovertsy*. *Deianie*, 6: 123.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 6:134.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 6:135.

⁷⁹ The count was 84 against the amendment and 82 in favour. *Deianiia*, 1918, 7:8.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 7:9–10.

⁸¹ Ibid., 7:4.

independent authority from the diocesan prelate, he would need his superior's permission for everything.⁸²

Once the final passage about the bishops had cleared, it was remarkably plain sailing. The remaining points of the new position were passed without a great deal of debate. However, the atmosphere remained rancorous. At the end of the discussion, Kirill (Smirnov) wanted to add a further point that all communications about the *Edinoverie* parishes would lie in the hands of the diocesan prelate, thereby interposing the Orthodox bishop between the Church authorities and the *Edinoverie* hierarchy.⁸³ Shleev responded that if one bishop, removed from the life of *Edinoverie* parishes, was allowed to control all communication, then the church authorities would not get fully accurate information. The *Edinoverie* bishop had to be included in this chain of communication on matters regarding his parishes.⁸⁴ This earned him a rebuke from the chair. Shleev had always accused the Orthodox of distrusting the *edinovertsy* but now he was doing almost the same thing: 'from you, it is always mistrust, mistrust, mistrust...'⁸⁵

All that remained were the points regarding education, the liturgy, church singing and changing the name of *Edinoverie* to Orthodox Old Belief. None of these plans for further confessionalising *Edinoverie* went down well. Serafim called the opinion dedicated to the purification of the liturgy a 'tirade' and insisted that the diversity of the *Edinoverie* liturgy would make the task proposed impossible. He pointed out that trying to substitute local traditions with a more correct *Edinoverie* liturgy in his diocese would mean 8,000 angry parishioners opposing the change and thus, ultimately, the expulsion of clergy from their parishes.⁸⁶ Cunningly, Serafim was turning the *edinovertsy*'s devotion to ritual as an argument against standardisation. Such a policy would provoke untold chaos.

At this point, the Council required that the additional opinions be sent back to the editorial commission for reformulation. When the document returned the next day, Shleev's side had lost the fight. The section on *Edinoverie* education (now point eighteen of the settlement) had been denuded of the demand for a single theological school in Moscow.⁸⁷ The newly included eighteenth rule made no provision for a theological school, instead articulating the need for parish and monastery schools with the aim of

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid., 7:44.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 7:45.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 7:46.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 7:82.

preparing the future candidates for the *Edinoverie* clergy. All the provisions about guaranteeing the liturgy and the singing had been lost.

Far more disturbing was a proposed amendment to article three that made the opening of new *Edinoverie* suffragancies dependent on the permission of the diocesan bishop. Serafim claimed such was necessary to preserve the supremacy of the bishop: ‘even the Council, without the will of the local bishop, cannot interfere in the matters of his diocese.’⁸⁸ Antonii (Khrapovitskii), acidly reminding Serafim that he had written the original article and knew a great deal more about the canons of the Church, argued that it was a senseless provision. If it had been in force in Orthodox Church, then barely a single suffragancy would have been made since 1800.⁸⁹ However, the change was accepted, ensuring that any new *Edinoverie* suffragancies had to be permitted by the diocesan bishops and could not be simply brought into being by the Council or the Patriarch.

This blow pushed Shleev beyond the limits of endurance. The existence of *Edinoverie* bishops was to be dependent on those very hierarchs he had spent more than decade railing against. As the Council debated changing the name of *Edinoverie*, he was asked whether he wanted to speak. Noting only that the name had been used in 1900 by the Synod itself,⁹⁰ he sighed that he was completely indifferent to the issue. The amendment that they had just passed on the issue of the bishops meant that ‘we have worked for eight days – and completely in vain.’⁹¹ With this, Shleev got up and left the hall, not even waiting for the session to close and to receive thanks from the chair for his hard work. His project was in tatters, defeated at the last hurdle. There was to be no independent *Edinoverie* episcopate, no removal of Orthodox hierarchs from positions of authority over the *edinovertsy*. There was to be no standardisation, no centralisation, no separatist confessionalisation.

Conclusion

On 6 March 1918, Metropolitan Veniamin (Kazanskii) of Petrograd received a petition from the Petrograd *Edinoverie* community (formerly the Petersburg *Edinoverie* brotherhood) asking for the establishment of a *Edinoverie* cathedra of Okhta.⁹² After establishing rules for the election of the candidates, a vote was held on 18 May. Simeon

⁸⁸ Ibid., 7:84.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 7:85 – 86.

⁹⁰ As I noted in the previous chapter, this was not the case.

⁹¹ *Deianie.*, 7:98.

⁹² RGIA, f. 831, op. 1, d. 51, l. 8.

Shleev gained 61 votes of the 71 available.⁹³ Quickly taking monastic vows, he adopted the name Simon and was consecrated on 3 June by Patriarch Tikhon and Metropolitan Veniamin in the Aleksandr Nevskii Lavra in Petrograd. The ceremony was performed according to the old rituals.⁹⁴ He was the first of nine *Edinoverie* bishops to be created in the 1920s, the fulfilment of the most substantial concession gained from the Church Council.⁹⁵

There were several results to be pleased with at the conclusion of the Council. Firstly, the rules of Platon had now been replaced: gone with them were the last traces of the confessional boundaries. Secondly, *Edinoverie* now had bishops. They were not independent prelates to be sure but nor were they the worse result that could have been obtained. However, it was far less than what Shleev had hoped for. He had wanted a parallel hierarchy to the Orthodox Church that would exist independently of the diocesan bishops. What he had gotten were essentially suffragan bishops and they were attached at the hip to the Orthodox diocesan prelates who, moreover, retained control over the appointment of *Edinoverie* hierarchs. Shleev had also lost some of his less prized projects: the name Orthodox Old Belief was to remain unofficial and the planned central theological school was not to be, depriving the future *Edinoverie* bishops of their own distinctive higher educational establishment.

William Wagner has noted that ‘the structures and procedures the Council followed enabled it to adopt a wide range of measures that apparently resolved many issues that had provoked public disagreement’: at the same time, a largely conservative episcopate was often determined in its opposition to radical reform.⁹⁶ The new rules of *Edinoverie* reflect this. On the one hand, there was a clear desire to resolve some of the most contentious problems of *Edinoverie* and provide a response to at least some of the demands that amounted over the nineteenth century. On the other, many remained opposed to even relatively moderate solutions to the episcopal problem, as the support for Serafim’s attempts to amend any form of *Edinoverie* bishop out of existence shows. The compromise position forged thus had the advantage of appealing to moderates whilst also

⁹³ Ibid., I. 2.

⁹⁴ M. Krasnozhen, “K postavlenniu pervogo edinovercheskogo episkopa Simona Okhtenskogo,” *Pribavleniia k Tserkovnym vedomostiam* no. 23–24 (1918): 703–704.

⁹⁵ The others were Amvrosii (Sosnovtsev), Iov (Rogozhin), Nikanor (Kudriavtsev), Pavel (Volkov), Irinei (Shul’min), Petr (Gasilov), Rufin (Brekhov) and Vassian (Veretennikov).

⁹⁶ W. G. Wagner, “‘Orthodox Domesticity’: Creating a Social Role for Women,” in M. D. Steinberg and H. J. Coleman, eds., *Sacred Stories: Religion and Spirituality in Modern Russia* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2007), 138–139.

alienating the radicals and conservatives. Serafim declared he could not ever recognise *Edinoverie* bishops whilst Shleev walked out of the Council in disgust. However, from the conservative perspective, the ability of the diocesan prelate to control the establishment of edinoverie cathedras offered a safety valve. Even if they did not recognise *Edinoverie* bishops, they at least would not have to suffer them in their own dioceses if they did not want to.

The crux of the debates in the Council revolved around the meaning of *Edinoverie*. It was a question of what defined true *Edinoverie* and false *Edinoverie*: the answer to this question necessitated clarifying what precisely Orthodoxy and Old Belief were. The opponents of Shleev were adamant that true *Edinoverie* meant *Edinoverie* without independent bishops. They perceived such a move as an indication that *Edinoverie* was returning to its schismatic roots. The parallel hierarchy was the institutionalisation of ritual intolerance. This kind of intolerance was a mark of Old Ritualism and not of Orthodoxy, since the Orthodox Church was a ritually tolerant institution capable of housing both the old and new rituals in harmony and peace. Shleev's plan did not simply threaten an administrative change: symbolically it denoted an abandonment of the principle of ritual toleration and a plunge into the schism. Remarkably, Shleev and his allies had few persuasive answers to this accusation, largely because these accusations contained more than a kernel of truth. Institutionalising *Edinoverie* ritual was precisely what Shleev was trying to do and had been trying to do for more than a decade. The entire basis of Shleev's confessionalising was to defend the *Edinoverie* liturgy against Orthodox encroachments and in doing so imposing one form of the *Edinoverie* liturgy that he himself approved of as the correct one. *Edinoverie* itself might have been more intolerant of ritual difference than Orthodoxy had officially been for some time. The *edinoverists* valued ritual so much that they wanted to a special space in the Church dedicated to it and to be known not by a name that signified their unity with Orthodoxy but by one that identified them as practitioners of the old rituals.

The victory of the Red Army in the Civil War and the almost complete destruction of the Church's administrative structures meant that the new rules of *Edinoverie* were never fully put into practice. However, let me briefly indulge in some counter-factual history. What might have become of *Edinoverie* had the Whites won the Civil War and thus preserved the Orthodox Church from persecution? Would it have been business as usual or might something else have developed? The Council largely kept intact the Synodal edicts of 27 May 1917 that had granted the *Edinoverie* a structure of congresses that would act as

administrative organs of *Edinoverie*, with the All-Russian Council of Congresses acting as an executive body. Even without the existence of an independent *Edinoverie* episcopate, it is probable the Council of Congresses would have still been able to fulfil the purposes for which it was established, centralising *Edinoverie* parishes under a single structure of authority that would see to it that all aspects of *Edinoverie* religious life were maintained and further developed. It seems unlikely that it would have taken very long for this body to begin formulating a uniform *Edinoverie* liturgy and also more fully expanding institutions of *Edinoverie* education with the intention both of keeping the liturgy pristine and also providing well-educated and capable candidates for all levels of the clerical hierarchy.

However, the lack of independent bishops might have ultimately hampered this task. Had an independent *Edinoverie* episcopate been allowed, then the dictates of the Council of Congresses would have gained formal control over *Edinoverie* dioceses. However, the *Edinoverie* bishops established by the Church Council were dependent on the local Orthodox hierarchs in all matters relating to their diocese. This meant that any provisions established by the Council of Congresses would have had to have been ratified by the diocesan prelates before the *Edinoverie* bishops could see to their implementation. As the plenary sessions of the Church Council proved, some hierarchs were hostile to the plans for developing the religious life of *Edinoverie*. This meant that in some instances the Council of Congresses' plans would have been subject to intensive periods of negotiation at the very least.

The essential problem was that the result of 1917-18 was contradictory. On the one hand, centralisation had been achieved through the creation of the Council of Congresses. On the other, the subordination of *Edinoverie* prelates to the diocesan bishops meant that *Edinoverie* was still very much at the whim of local church authorities and local conditions. Neither centralisation nor localisation had triumphed. Had the White Army won, it seems likely that these two principles would have entered into further conflict with each other. It is impossible to suggest a victor. Everything would have depended on the circumstances in which the Church found itself. Given that in 1918 both the *Edinoverie* and the missionaries had assumed radical positions which neither would freely abandon, the central authorities of the Church would have probably continued to try and furnish a compromise position between the two.

However, such conflict would have continued to fan the flames of *Edinoverie* confessionalisation. It was the clashes between *Edinoverie* and Orthodoxy over the

nineteenth century that had helped the former to develop distinctive ideas about its place between the Church and the schism. The classic paradigm of confessionalisation holds that it thrives not on peaceful co-existence but rather on frequent divisions that reveal the differences that drive individuals and groups to define themselves in opposition to each other. With the *edinovertsy* still in full subordination to Orthodox prelates for most aspects of their religious lives, there is no reason to believe that clashes would have ceased simply because of the presence of an intermediary figure in the person of the *Edinoverie* bishop. Conflict between the prelates and Shleev's Council of Congresses would equally have provided further material for the development of his worldview that *Edinoverie*'s religious life was so special and valuable to the Orthodox Church that it required protection from those unfriendly churchmen who consistently misunderstood its essence.

Indeed, it may not be too much of a leap to suggest that confessionalisation might have proceeded even faster from the compromise position forged in 1918 than from a full *Edinoverie* victory. Such a compromise still left fertile ground for a gnawing feeling of inequality before the Orthodox. This might very well have continued to push the *edinovertsy* to more extreme positions. No less important was the fact that *Edinoverie* had a whole range of institutions that existed to help amplify their sense of religious difference. The Church Council had confirmed the need for *Edinoverie* singing courses and a network of schools, even if they refused the request for a single higher theological school in Moscow. The monasteries too continued to exist. Finally, on a symbolic level, the anathemas were still there, forever reminding at least some *edinovertsy* that the legitimacy of their rituals was still up for debate.

The compromise forged in 1918 bore some distinct resemblances to the Platonic paradoxes of 1800. This time the contradiction lay in the fact that confessional integration and further ritual institutionalisation had been ratified within the settlement. On the one hand, the new rules emphasised the idea of a *Edinoverie* fully integrated into the Orthodox confession. The confessional boundaries of Platon had been abolished and replaced with fervent assurances of the right of *Edinoverie* hierarchs and clergy to officiate over Orthodox parishioners and that the latter could convert to *Edinoverie* if they so desired. No less important, the *Edinoverie* suffragans were to be subordinated to Orthodox superiors. What came from the troubled years of the Russian Revolution was, for the most part, the confirmation of Subbotin and Pavel's definition of *Edinoverie* and their corresponding definitions of Orthodoxy and Old Belief. True *Edinoverie* was defined as being in full union with the Orthodox Church. Any action that was taken to violate that

unity would mean would only help to render '*Edinoverie*' false and 'schismatic.' The only deviation from Subbotin's original idea was that having some form of bishops did not necessarily constitute a violation of that unity. This was hardly radical, however. The Synod had essentially established this back in 1885 when they had offered a bishopric to Pavel Prusskii and the Pre-Counciliar Commission of 1906 had confirmed it.

For most of the Orthodox, the question hinged on what sort of bishop could be permitted. One that was fully subordinated to the Orthodox prelate was permissible but the creation of a parallel hierarchy was not, primarily because it reinforced the age old fears of the Orthodox that the moment the *edinovertsy* received their canonically legitimate bishop, they would return to the schism and create an Old Believer church whose hierarchs had been consecrated by the Orthodox Church itself. Confessional anxieties still remained the key force in shaping *Edinoverie*.

Epilogue

We deeply regret those brutalities which were inflicted on adherents of the old ritual, those persecutions from the civil authorities which were inspired by some of our ancestors in the hierarchy of the Russian Church...Forgive us, brothers and sisters, for our sins, inflicted on you by hatred. Do not think of us as accomplices in the sins of our ancestors, do not lay your bitterness on us for their unbridled actions. Although we are the descendants of your persecutors, we are not to blame for the sorrows inflicted on you. Forgive us those grievances so that we can be free from the admonitions that weigh heavily upon them. We kneel before you and entrust ourselves to your prayers. Forgive those who wounded you with thoughtless coercion, because with our lips they repent of what they did and ask forgiveness. – The Episcopal Council of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, 24 October 2000 (N.S.).¹

On 18 August 1921, Simon (Shleev) was returning home after performing an evening liturgy in Ufa's cathedral. His party noticed two men in the courtyard of the convent where the bishop resided. When they were only fifteen metres away, one of the strangers produced a revolver and fired twice. Both shots hit the bishop and the assailants fled into the darkening night. So died the first *Edinoverie* bishop of Russia.² Equally violent and distressing fates awaited most of the new *Edinoverie* episcopate. Only Pavel (Volkov) lived through the Terror to die of old age in 1950.

The accession of Lenin's Bolsheviks to power did not mean an immediate end for either the Church or *Edinoverie*. However, Russian Orthodoxy struggled against straitened circumstances as its property was appropriated, its bishops were arrested, and its priests shot or exiled. The government encouraged dissatisfied radicals to break away from Orthodoxy and form the Renovationist Church.³ Antonii (Khrapovitskii) fled into exile and became the head of the Russian Church Abroad. Andrei (Ukhtomskii) collided again and again with the Patriarchate before allegedly converting to the Belaia Krinitsa hierarchy in August 1925.⁴ But services in *Edinoverie* churches continued. Stefan Smirnov, the priest of the Mikhailovskaia Sloboda *Edinoverie* church in Moscow, dutifully noted in his diary the regular performance of the liturgy, even as church

¹ "Obrashchenie k staroobriadtsam arkhieieiskogo sobora Russkoi pravoslavnoi tserkvi zagranitse," *Vestnik Germanskoi eparkhii RPTsZ*, no. 5–6 (2000): 6–7.

² N. P. Zimina, *Put' na Golgotu* (Moscow, 2005), 304–305.

³ E. E. Roslof, *Red Priests: Renovationism, Russian Orthodoxy, and Revolution, 1905-1946* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002).

⁴ Andrei was joined by the *Edinoverie* prelate (Rufin Brekhov). Both Andrei and his biographer claimed this action was not conversion but rather an abortive effort to bring the Old Believers back into the Church. M. Zelenogorskii, *Zhizn' i trudy arkhiepiskopa Andreia (kniazia Ukhtomskogo)*, 2nd ed. (Moscow, 2011), 174.

valuables were taken and atheist propagandists assailed his parishioners.⁵ He died a natural death in 1933.

It was Stalin's rise to power that finally pushed *Edinoverie* into collapse. The Nikol'skaia church in St. Petersburg, the former parish of Timofei Verkhovskii and Shleev, was closed in 1930 and then turned into the Museum of the Arctic and Antarctic three years later. The Nikol'skii monastery in Moscow, the seat of Pavel Prusskii, became communal housing for the workers of a radio factory in 1923. The Uspenskaia church above the gate continued to function as a parish church, although it was turned over to the Renovationists. In the 1930s, the Soviet government returned the monastery to the priestless Old Believers and the NKVD shot its final *Edinoverie* abbot in 1937.⁶ Of the roughly 350 *Edinoverie* parishes that existed in Russia in 1917, only three are known to have continued serving the liturgy into the 1980s.⁷

With the virtual disappearance of *Edinoverie*, the questions that it provoked died away as well. However, the ritual re-evaluation that had brought *Edinoverie* into being was still playing out. On 10 April 1929, Sergii (Stragorodskii), the patriarchal *locum tenens*, declared the seventeenth century anathemas abolished. They had to be removed to allow 'the healing of church division over the old rituals and to calm those who used and now use the aforementioned rites by the blessing of the Church and in communion with it.'⁸ Every aspect of the pre-Nikonian ritual was declared purely Orthodox. A local Church Council that met between 30 May and 2 June 1971 backed Sergii's decision.⁹ The resolution maintained that the Church had never conflated ritual with dogma but Metropolitan Nikodim (Rotov) of Leningrad went further, stating that Patriarch Nikon had 'looked on differences in ritual as on differences in faith.'¹⁰ The Orthodox Church finally conceded the antiquity of the old rituals and their full and absolute equality with

⁵ S. Smirnov, *Zapiski sel'skogo sviashchennika. Dnevnikovye zapisi sviashchennosluzhitelia edinovercheskogo khrama arkhangela Mikhaila sela Mikhailovskaia Sloboda protoiereia Stefana Smirnova, napisannye im samim s 1905 po 1933 god.*, ed. E. Sarancha (Moscow, 2008), 117–203.

⁶ Damaskin (Orlovskii), *Mucheniki, ispovedniki i podvizhniki blagochestiia Russkoi pravoslavnoi tserkvi XX stoletii*, vol. 6 (Tver, 2002), 428–437.

⁷ E. Sarancha, I. Mirolubov, and N. P. Zimina, *Kratkii ocherk istorii edinoveriia*, 51–52, *Edinoverie.com*, <http://www.edinoverie.com/img/200911261211024AA.pdf>, (accessed 29 March 2014).

⁸ Quoted in A. Kravetskii, "K istorii sniatii kliatv na donikonovskie obriady," *Bogoslovskie trudy* 39 (2004): 327.

⁹ "Deianie osviashchennogo pomestnogo sobora Russkoi pravoslavnoi tserkvi. Ob otmene kliatv na starye obriady i na priderzhivaiushchikhsia ikh," *Zhurnal Moskovskoi patriarkhii* no. 6 (1971): 6.

¹⁰ "Ob otmene kliatv na starye obriady. Doklad mitropolita Leningradskogo i Novgorodskogo Nikodima (Rotova) na pomestnom sobore 31 maia 1971 Goda," *Zhurnal Moskovskoi patriarkhii*, no. 6 (1971): 63.

the Nikonian ones. The abolition of the anathemas marks the logical conclusion of the ritual re-evaluation and with it the demise of the Nikonian rites to function as a way to distinguish the Orthodox confession.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, *Edinoverie* too began to revive. There are 25 parishes now extant, mostly in the territory of the Russian Federation: the others are in Latvia, Ukraine, Belarus, and the USA. There can be no doubt that *Edinoverie* owes much of its recent restoration to the current Patriarch, Kirill (Gundiaev). He has given it considerable attention since the early years of the twenty-first century. In 2009, he established the Patriarchal Centre of the Old Russian Liturgical Tradition to study *Edinoverie's* past and plan for its future. On 30 May 2014, the Holy Synod established five new guidelines for managing conversions to *Edinoverie*, thereby taking a step closer to replacing the rules of Metropolitan Platon.¹¹

In 2004, Kirill proclaimed that *Edinoverie* could be useful but that it has some weakness. He noted that Old Believers still felt that representatives of Russian Orthodoxy were maligning the pre-Nikonian rites.¹² However, most telling is the following statement:

Dangerous tendencies to internal isolation and separatism manifest themselves in the presence of those who defend an independence that is integrated into the general life of parishes. In some *Edinoverie* circles the ideology and psychology of the schism is maintained and alienation from general church life and even from the hierarchy itself actually occurs. Incidentally, this unpleasantly surprises those from the Old Believers who strive to find genuine unity with the Orthodox Church under the defence of old customs and traditions. Thus life drives us to consideration of the question about the feasibility of forming a special church organ. It could work in partnership with bishops in dioceses where Old Believer parishes are present, co-ordinate and support their activities and in cases of necessity respond in a timely fashion to the appearance of potentially negative tendencies that are connected with the life of *Edinoverie* communities.¹³

¹¹ “Zhurnaly zasedaniia sviashchennogo sinoda ot 30 maia 2014 goda,” *Patriarchia.ru*, <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/3664563.html> (accessed 31 May 2014).

¹² Metropolitan Kirill (Gundiaev): ‘Doklad mitropolita Smolenskogo i Kaliningradskogo Kirilla, predsedatelja otdela vneshnikh tserkovnikh vsiamootnoshenii s Russkoi zarubezhnoi tserkov’iu i staroobriadchestvom,’ *Patriarchia.ru* <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/423152.html>, (accessed 31 January 2014)

¹³ Ibid.

This is a repetition of the suspicion of motives and internal convictions of the *edinovertsy* that have framed Orthodox relations with them since the late eighteenth century. There is even a return to that core distinction of confessional integration, that between ‘true’ and ‘false’ *Edinoverie*, the latter striving for ‘genuine unity’ and the latter asserting their independence. The resolution Kirill proposes is an institution that will serve to integrate the *edinovertsy* with their diocesan prelates whilst being watchful for those ‘potentially negative tendencies’ that blight *Edinoverie* communities. Once again the idea that such institutions might provoke the separatism that the Church seeks to avoid has not been considered. Kirill’s declaration demonstrates the depths of the structural problem of *Edinoverie*. Even after its virtual destruction, the attempt to find a new solution is bound by a contradiction between downgrading the significance of ritual and reifying it through institutional forms. Institutionalisation and integration are once again being invoked in the same breath.

Conclusion

Between 1652 and 1667, the Russian Orthodox Church and the Muscovite Tsardom confronted something that was almost unprecedented in their history. A group of extraordinarily pious churchmen broke away from Russian Orthodoxy and formed the basis for a widespread movement of religious dissent. By the early decades of the eighteenth century, this had become Old Belief. Aleksei Mikhailovich and his successors were forced to confront the same challenge that European monarchies had had to face in the wake of Martin Luther and Jean Calvin. How was a modernising state to deal with religious heterodoxy? There was a stark choice to be made between asserting uniformity and managing plurality, between confessionalisation and tolerance. The answer that prevailed up until the early eighteenth century was to try and persecute Old Belief out of existence whilst backing the Church as it pursued centralising reforms that would enable it to enforce ritual uniformity. When this failed, Peter I and Catherine II sought to tolerate Old Belief in the hope that they could exploit its financial resources or have its adherents settle in vulnerable border regions. But this did not stop the Church from defining itself against Old Belief and viewing it with hostility and suspicion.

The answers to all three questions that I set out at the beginning of this thesis lie in this dynamic between tolerance (particularly its ritual component) and confessionalisation. Its meaning, its relationship to the Church and its lack of success all relate to the fact that it was a child born in the midst of a compromise between a tolerant state and a confessionalising church.

The meaning of *Edinoverie* was always highly dependent on where it was placed in regards to the Orthodox confession. That placement was subject to shift when the policies of the state towards Old Belief changed. In the first eighty years of *Edinoverie*'s existence, there was tremendous reluctance on the part of the Church to even recognise it as fully Orthodox. It was 'a step to Orthodoxy,' something on the boundaries of the confession that could never be fully trusted because its rituals contained within them the spirit of the schism. This suspicion is what drove Platon to formulate a settlement that did its utmost to keep the *edinovertsy* and the Orthodox apart from one another. The only way that the *edinovertsy* could be fully Orthodox was if they accepted the Nikonian rites. It is in this sense that I have called *Edinoverie* a quarantine zone. It was a place where those infected with Old Belief could be slowly cleansed of their schismatic leanings. Once purified, they could leave. The Church could no more allow Orthodox believers to enter

into *Edinoverie* than a hospital can allow the healthy to walk into a room full of infectious disease. This was confessional assimilation.

However, assimilation was essentially contradicted by the 1800 settlement itself and by the general situation of the Church. The settlement institutionalised ritual difference, creating a series of novel administrative structures that existed entirely to keep the old rites intact. The fact that the Church could not afford to pay its clergy a salary meant that *Edinoverie* priests would hardly push their parishioners to abandon the old rites for the new. They needed as many parishioners as possible to keep the level of emoluments relatively high. This was itself a consequence of the state assuming greater and greater control over the Church for the sake of its own ends. Catherine the Great's seizure of monastic land meant that there was no way the Synod could pay wages. Assimilation was fundamentally undermined.

Consequently, had it not been for Nicholas I, *Edinoverie* would have remained a mistrusted and maligned Old Believer concord with tenuous links to the Church hierarchy. Ritual was all too important a way of defining the Orthodox confession for it be sacrificed so a few thousand quasi-schismatics could practice their rite in the Church. However, when Nicholas drove tens of thousands into *Edinoverie*, the situation changed. The Church found itself with a substantial new flock, most of whom had no interest in being subordinated to the Synod beyond the need to survive in face of persecution. Ways had to be found to keep the *edinovertsy* within the Church, not least because Nicholas was personally interested in ensuring that this was the case. If *Edinoverie* were insufficiently attractive, the converts would once again escape the surveillance of the state and become disloyal subjects. Consequently, the first modifications to the 1800 settlement were undertaken in 1832 and 1845. The 1832 change to the fifth rule of Platon that modified the prohibition against Orthodox conversion to *Edinoverie* reflected the need to assert that *Edinoverie* and Orthodoxy were united. The 1845 edict that demanded the strict observation of integrity of the old rites further contradicted confessional assimilation. Confessional integration (the assertion that *Edinoverie* and Orthodoxy were the same in all things but ritual) was becoming the most obvious way forward, especially when the more tolerant approach of Alexander rendered *Edinoverie* vulnerable to apostasy.

However, coercion had its own peculiar logic. By forcing a huge number of insincere converts into *Edinoverie*, the state had retroactively justified Platon's fears. Bishops, theologians and missionaries were fully correct between 1864 and 1880 when they

pointed out that many of the *edinovertsy* were schismatics in all but name. How could such people be integrated into the Orthodox confession when they posed such a dire threat? The clergy of the Church were also in no mood to allow their flocks to freely convert to *Edinoverie* since that might reduce them to penury. Changes to *Edinoverie* were both desirable and threatening in the era of the Great Reforms and so the Church was split on how to act. Given the depth of the problem and the extent of the division, the Synod felt it wise to barely act at all.

Three things led to a change. The first was the tolerance of Alexander II who sought to utilise Old Belief as a conservative force to counterbalance the radicalism unleashed by his own transformation of Russian society in the 1860s. The second was that Platon's hens came back to roost in the person of Ioann Verkhovskii. Having seen, enacted, and felt the way in which the rules created a sense of unjust and hypocritical difference between the *edinovertsy* and the Orthodox, Verkhovskii launched an embittered and enraged attack on *Edinoverie*. He proposed nothing less than its destruction and the legitimisation of Old Belief. Were changes not made to the rules, it was likely that *edinovertsy* would find Verkhovskii's vision attractive. It was, after all, based on a hatred of problems inherent in Platon's rules that the *edinovertsy* lived with every day. The petitions that arose from Moscow and Nizhnii Novgorod in 1877 asking for changes confirmed that there was general dissatisfaction. Thirdly, there was the team of Nikolai Subbotin, Pavel Prusskii, and Konstantin Pobedonostsev. All three had realised the effect that the Platonic settlement was having and pushed confessional integration as the solution. With Pobedonostsev rising to the position of ober-procurator in 1880 and the accession of Alexander III, they were in a position to force their policy through.

The result was the 1881 changes to the rules of Platon and the 1886 Synodal edicts. The former reduced the prohibition on Orthodox conversion to *Edinoverie* and allowed the Orthodox to take the sacraments in *Edinoverie* churches. The latter declared that *Edinoverie* was fully part of the Orthodox confession and then offered prelates the choice to do away with the fifth rule of Platon entirely if they so choose. In the process, the old rites were *de facto* recognised as equal to the new. With this, the disjuncture between dogma and rite, between internal belief and external action, was fully realised. No less than this, the connection of ritual and confessional identity collapsed: if the old rites were just as Orthodox as the new, then the latter could not serve to distinguish between Orthodoxy and the Old Believers. Therefore it was necessary to turn the ritual re-evaluation itself into a marker of Orthodoxy. To be Orthodox, one had to be ritually

tolerant and believe that two legitimate and equal rites could be allowed in the Church without harm.

The victory of Subbotin, the major theorist of this plan, seemed complete. Verkhovskii was unable to stand the withering glare of Pobedonostsev and fled abroad in fear for his freedom. On the surface, the contradictions of Platon had largely been resolved: integration was preferred over assimilation, inclusivity over exclusivity and conscience over confession (at least in ritual matters). But in the murky depths below, problems still lay unsolved. Firstly, the rules of Platon remained in force and therefore could continue to shape diocesan policy and remain a symbol of religious difference. Secondly, the changes of 1880s could not undo the last eight decades where the 1800 settlement had existed more or less unchallenged. The bishops, consistories and clergy of the last thirty years of the imperial regime had all been raised on the idea that the old rite was inferior, even heretical. The idea of being ritually tolerant or allowing the *edinovertsy* into the Orthodox confession remained far from the minds of many churchmen. Thirdly, the reforms had not fully answered the demands of the *edinovertsy*. They wanted a bishop as a sign of their equal standing and to offer true pastoral care and attention. They wanted the removal of the 1667 anathemas to show that their rites were truly valid in the eyes of all. These things they had not received. Subbotin's very conception of integration meant that such reforms were viewed with deepest distrust. Fear that *Edinoverie* bishops might defect to the Belaia Krinitsa hierarchy played a role in his thinking but there was another, deeper, concern that pointed to the last and most fundamental contradiction of Platon.

The rules of Platon had institutionalised ritual difference but yet were based on the premise that ritual was an insignificant matter. The *Edinoverie* rites were so significant that they got their own priests, monasteries, typography, schools, superintendents and a direct connection to the bishop. But, in the terms of the ritual re-evaluation, rites could not be the basis for such an administrative division. Subbotin and his successors understood this and so were adamantly opposed to furthering the institutionalisation by allowing bishops. More difficult still was the fact that the recognition of the old rites as essentially equal to the Orthodox ones had meant that the acceptance of the ritual re-evaluation, that rituals should not be a cause for division, had become the mark of being Orthodox. The *edinovertsy* were now part of the Orthodox confession and thus had to realise that point. However, the institutionalisation of their ritual meant they were hardly likely to do so.

This was the situation in 1905 when the Edict of Toleration and the October Manifesto were promulgated. *Edinoverie* and Orthodoxy were not united in many things but they were certainly joined by their interest in the repression of Old Belief. The confessional state of Nicholas I and Alexander III had brought into *Edinoverie* innumerable converts and a hefty haul of confiscated goods that ranged from entire monastery complexes to treasured icons. When persecution vanished after 1905 and the new constitutional government started to seek the support of the Old Believers, *Edinoverie* and Orthodoxy were confronted with a crisis. Apostasy was not just a threat: in some dioceses, it was a reality. The Old Believers were campaigning for the return of confiscated property and had the ear of Petr Stolypin and the State Duma. Once coercion vanished, the confessionalised Church was vulnerable. This might have given both Orthodoxy and *Edinoverie* a new reason to radically reform their internal workings so as to promote a lay-centric vision that gave full rein to the piety of the millions of Orthodox believers across the Empire. But confessionalisation was a poisoned chalice in more ways than one. The state was unwilling to relinquish its control over the Church. Nicholas and his advisors blocked any possibility of a new relationship between Church and state and thus crippled any reform movement.

This had a direct effect on *Edinoverie*. The Synod and the highest organs of the missionary movement knew very well that without persecution, confessional integration was the best possible way of keeping the *edinovertsy* in the flock. However, the lack of a Church Council left it unable to act decisively. The rules of Platon remained obstinately in place, giving freedom to diocesan administrations to continue to enforce their strictures. The best that the Synod could do was use its appellate function to quash consistorial decisions and utilise ceremony in the hope that dazzling gaudiness would convince the *edinovertsy* that unity in faith was real.

One of the key reasons that this was not successful was the presence of Simeon Ivanovich Shleev. Like Verkhovskii before him, Shleev was convinced that the only way to protect *Edinoverie* was to separate it from Orthodoxy. But rather than demand a full break, Shleev was still willing to acquiesce to the highest levels of the Church administration. He valued *Edinoverie*'s link to ecumenical Orthodoxy through the Russian Church. Thus, he devised a plan to create two confessions within the Orthodox Church, connected only through the Synod or the Church Council. What he wanted was the confessionalisation of *Edinoverie*: the course he planned reflected exactly the same route that the Orthodox Church itself had taken. *Edinoverie* would be centralised, its clergy and parishioners

educated, its administration tightened and its discipline extended. For this, *Edinoverie* would need bishops, more and better schools, congresses, brotherhoods, and mutual aid funds, on both the national and the local level.

All of this was to be done in the name of protecting the old rituals from the assimilative tendencies of the rules of Platon and the churchmen who imbibed them. In Shleev's mind, the *Edinoverie* rites had an almost messianic importance. Their antiquity, their piety, their Russianness would save the Church from western secularism and bureaucratic imposition. In 1917, Shleev declared that they would save Russia itself from the Bolsheviks on the one hand and the Germans on the other.

This is where the final contradiction of Platon came into play. The missionaries and the Synod were dedicated to confessional integration. This had meant turning the ritual re-evaluation into a point of identity. The idea that ritual should be further institutionalised or that *Edinoverie* be turned into a separate confession for the sake of rites ran directly counter to this: ritual could not serve as grounds for further division. And so they opposed the confessionalisation of *Edinoverie* at almost every turn.

This was ultimately what the furious arguments at the Church Council of 1917-18 were about. Shleev proposed that *Edinoverie* was something more than Orthodoxy. It was a purer Orthodoxy, one uncorrupted by the previous two centuries of Synodal mismanagement and insidious westernisation. Its essence had to be protected. His opposition, by this point all of the missionaries and most of the episcopate, denied this. *Edinoverie* was indivisibly part of the Orthodox confession. As such, it had to bow to the ritual re-evaluation, it could not be further divided from the Orthodox faith on the basis of ritual. Shleev was finally defeated because he had failed to understand that the moment the Church realised the ritual re-evaluation in its fullness would be the moment when it would stop considering further institutionalisation of ritual difference. He was defeated by the ultimate contradiction inherent in *Edinoverie*. It existed to defend the old rites but had been brought into existence to demonstrate the inconsequence of rites.

The settlement forged in 1917-18 ultimately continued that contradiction's legacy. Further institutionalisation of *Edinoverie* was granted whilst still strenuously asserting that rite was no reason for separation. As Patriarch Kirill's 2004 statement shows, that legacy remains very much alive.

The above narrative answers our first two questions and gives a partial resolution to the third. No-one could agree on what *Edinoverie* meant, a fact rooted in the ritual re-

evaluation and the interplay of confessionalisation and tolerance. To some, it was a quarantine zone for semi-schismatics, a settlement granted because of state pressure. It existed to keep the Orthodox confession, defined through the Nikonian rituals, safe. To others, it was fully Orthodox and that entailed its adherents agreeing to the fact that ritual was largely insignificant when it came to the matter of Church unity. And to some, it was Orthodox Old Belief, a way to unite the warring factions of Eastern Orthodoxy in Russia and infuse both with what the other lacked. The Church would gain the piety of the old rituals whilst Old Belief would be provided access to the apostolic succession. But that meant defending the rites. All three of these visions interacted. Indeed, they were a product of each other, meshed together as they were by the state's inability to conclusively decide on what way was best to govern Russia's people: by forcing uniformity or by tolerating plurality.

The reason why *Edinoverie* failed is partially due to this indecision over its meaning and the relationship to the Church. Shleev was surely right to assert in his book of 1910 that the distrust the Church had hitherto shown to *Edinoverie* convinced both its adherents and the Old Believers that *Edinoverie* and Orthodoxy were not one and the same. However, this is not the whole story, as our brief forays into *Edinoverie*'s interaction with Old Belief make clear.

Firstly, the state itself had assured that the Old Believers would look at *Edinoverie* with the deepest of misgivings. In the process of Nicolaevan confessionalisation, *Edinoverie* had succeeded in tearing communities and families apart whilst receiving all that was necessary for their religious practices from state confiscations. As their polemics show, the Old Believers were well aware of the police function that *Edinoverie* was expected to fulfil: they would hardly trust the religious baton of the gendarme any more than they would trust the gendarme himself.

However, Shleev and the Church never understood the basic reason why the schismatics were reluctant to join *Edinoverie*. They both believed that the way to get Old Believers into *Edinoverie* was by making certain concessions: offering legitimate priests, getting the anathemas repealed, or establishing episcopates. This might answer some of the critique offered by the Old Believers but it did not remove the fundamental motive behind the schism. The Church had changed rituals and to change rituals was to change dogma. The Church had thus fallen into heresy. Whilst it maintained the belief in the rectitude of Nikon and the new rites, there could be no reconciliation. The Nikonian rituals were heresy and that was the end of the matter. The most that even the Belaia Krinitsa

hierarchy was willing to concede in 1862 was that the Orthodox did not worship the Anti-Christ with their rites. There was a long way to go from this to recognising the legitimacy of the new rituals. Ironically, the ritual re-evaluation made the situation worse. Not only had the Church abandoned the old rites but it had now declared that ritual was a relatively insignificant matter. All of the critiques levelled at *Edinoverie* came from the fact that the Old Believers refused to recognise the legitimacy of the Church. Consequently, it did not matter how united *Edinoverie* and Orthodox were or how many bishops the *edinovertsy* had. Whilst the Nikonian rites existed, the Church was heretical and illegitimate: there could be no re-union.

The only course left to the Orthodox Church and *Edinoverie* was to persuade the Old Believers of the correctness of their position. However, persuasion was undermined by coercion. Before *Edinoverie* came into existence, the schism had already endured a century of persecution and few were willing to hear the call. The ever-perceptive American A. F. Heard was right when he argued in 1887 that:

Had a similar step been taken when Alexis was on the throne it might have stifled the Raskol at its birth: nearly all that had been demanded originally was accorded, but it could no longer suffice. A century and more had passed – long years of struggling, persecution and suffering: dissent had crystallized and hardened into schism, with habits of independence and of free inquiry; it had become impatient of control, with an individuality of its own, social and political, as well as religious, and a deeper principle than one of mere ceremony was at stake. The sincerity of those in power was doubted; Old Ritualists, now Old Believers and schismatics, feared the Church and the gifts it proffered.¹

Edinoverie failed partially to tempt the schismatics because of the distaste for the Church and the coercion of the state but principally it failed because it did not answer the theological objections of the Old Believers. The only thing that could answer those objections by 1800 was the full surrender of the Church of its position, something a confessionalised institution was never going to do.

The lesson of *Edinoverie*'s failure takes us back to our starting point. *Edinoverie* was an attempt to find a road between confessionalisation and tolerance, homogeneity and heterogeneity. Its lack of success shows just how difficult it is to forge a middle course. Almost no other European churches have managed. The Anglican Church seems to offer a

¹ A. F. Heard, *The Russian Church and Russian Dissent, Comprising Orthodoxy, Dissent, and Erratic Sects* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), 231–232.

more successful example of an attempt to allow two liturgical traditions to exist under the same roof. However, this state of affairs was contested until quite recently. When the Anglo-Catholics, following on the heels of the Oxford Movement, tried to catholicise a largely Protestant ritual compact, the result was rioting and ultimately an Act of Parliament in 1867 that forbade the introduction of Catholic liturgical practices. Five clergymen went to prison as a result.² Frederick William III's Prussian Church Union, an effort to merge the Calvinists and Lutherans together under a single ritual in 1817, fared little better. It provoked an Old Lutheran separatist movement that refused to abandon its rites: many emigrated to Australia and America.³

The salient moral of these stories suggests that states should not underestimate the role of confessionalisation, and particularly its ritual dimension, on churches and believers. Once the process is started, it has proven almost impossible to reverse. Foisting uniate movements onto them as a substitute for real tolerance simply provokes contradiction, controversy, and revolt. The Russian Orthodox Church was burdened in the imperial era by demands that far outstretched its capacity to resolve them. *Edinoverie* only worsened matters while satisfying very few. It did not offer the Old Believers a chance to escape their piteous position. It did not give the Orthodox Church victory over the schism. It did not guarantee loyal subjects or better control for the state. It did not offer the *edinovertsy* real unity.

One result of *Edinoverie* was positive, if entirely unintended. The realisation of the ritual re-evaluation has led to the deconfessionalisation of ritual in Russian Orthodoxy. It is notable that in 1917 at the Church Council, a second form of *Edinoverie* was proposed for the Uniates, suggesting that the importance of rite had been sufficiently downgraded to even allow elements of the Catholic liturgy into the Church.⁴ The removal of the anathemas and the concession that the old rites really are older than the new ones in 1971 backs such an interpretation. This might furnish grounds for dialogue between the modern Church and the descendants of Old Belief. What role *Edinoverie* will play in this remains to be seen. Perhaps without the pressures of a state interested in persecuting the Old

² For a general account of "Ritualism", see N. Yates, *Anglican Ritualism in Victorian Britain, 1830-1910* (Oxford: Ohio University Press, 2000). For the legislation against it, see J. Bentley, *Ritualism and Politics in Victorian England. The Attempt to Legislate for Belief* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978).

³ C. Clark, "Confessional Policy and the Limits of State Action: Frederick William III and the Prussian Church Union, 1817-1840," *Historical Journal* 39, no. 4 (1996): 984-1004.

⁴ A. Kravetskii, *Tserkovnaia missiia v epokhu peremen (mezhdu propoved'iu i dialogom)*. (Moscow, 2012), 174-175.

Believers and with ritual no longer such a question in the minds of leading churchmen, *Edinoverie* will truly function as a bridge to the schism, a place where two opposed sides can meet and discuss their differences.

However, that is for the future. In terms of *Edinoverie* between 1800 and 1918, I offer the following answers to my original questions. What was *Edinoverie*? Something that few wanted and fewer profited from. What was its relationship to Orthodoxy? That of a burden, reluctantly undertaken and forever a thorn in the side of the Church. Why did it fail? Because it never stood a chance in the first place. To borrow a phrase from Ioann Verkhovskii, *Edinoverie* was ‘a half measure and, as with all half measures, a mistaken one.’⁵

⁵ I. Verkhovskii, *Sochineniia Ioanna Verkhovskogo*, vol. 3 (Leipzig, 1886), 31.

Appendices

Appendix (a): The Rules of Metropolitan Platon, 27 September 1800¹

Moscow Old Believers	Platon
1) That the Holy Synod removes the previously placed anathemas on the two fingered sign of the cross and other rituals similar to them.	1) The anathemas placed on them are to be removed, although the Church was correct to place them, which they themselves recognise, since they consider themselves bound by them and they ask for their removal. However as they are now reconciling and joining with the Church and they recognise its real truth, then by necessity these anathemas (under which those still rejecting the Church continue to correctly stand) should no longer weigh on their consciences. So that this removal is open and calms them more, over each of those joining, the bishop or priest is to read the following prayer of removal with a hand laid upon them: ‘Our Lord God Jesus Christ, by His grace and love of humanity, removes from you, a person turning to the Holy Church, any anathema placed on those who reject it. And I, unworthy bishop or priest (so-and-so) by the authority given to me by Him, remove from the servant of God (so-and-so) any anathema and all your sins. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, amen.’
2) That His Grace deigns to choose priests and deacons who by their desire agree to be in Old Belief and by the desire	2) The second article in all its force is allowed by indulgence but so as to place again priests by election of the parishioners

¹ R. V. Kaurkin and O. A. Pavlova, *Edinoverie v Rossii: ot zarozhdeniia idei do nachala XX veka* (St. Petersburg, 2011), 187–192.

<p>of parishioners. If the chosen do not refuse, then to ordain them by the previously printed books of the priests chosen by Your Grace and by the desire of the parishioners. Also priests who have defected into Old Belief before, if they seem without fault and go to Your Grace with true humility, allow and bless them to perform the Divine Service and Christian requirements. Such priests who fled without the permission of their bishop to Old Believer churches will not be accepted.</p>	<p>and by the review and judgement of the bishop: and their previous priests, who were fugitives and traitors of the Church, their consciences, and their ranks, will not be placed in such churches.</p>
<p>3) That the Holy Synod and Your Grace bless Old Believer priests to perform the Divine Service, sacraments and Christian requirements according to the books previously printed under the All-Russian Patriarchs Iovv, Ermogen, Filaret, Ioasaf and Iosif, to which must follow deacons and church servitors.</p>	<p>3) The third article is also allowed, because although in the books used by them there is sinfulness, it is not in the essential dogmas of the faith but in words and rituals and the acquisition of church peace is important above all else.</p>
<p>4) The churches of the Old Believers are blessed by Your Grace according to the old books or by the blessing of Your Grace to Old Believer priests; and that antimensia, blessed under the aforementioned Patriarchs or again blessed by Your Grace according to the old books, as is shown in the old Typikon.</p>	<p>4) It is possible to profess agreement to the fourth article.</p>
<p>5) Old Believer priests are not required to go to the Greco-Russian Church for collective prayers and the same for cross processions and anything similar; but to administer them in Old Believer churches</p>	<p>5) Also allowed but it is appropriate before prohibiting some of the mentioned persons from the church to present this issue to the good reason of the assigned priests with the instruction of the bishop.</p>

<p>by the blessing of Your Grace. Also do not compel Old Believers to allow in common prayers those who mark themselves with the three fingers, shaved beards and others who have disagreements with the old customs (excepting the highest personages). Do not prohibit those Old Believers who are unregistered but from long ago were separated from the Greco-Russian Church to join to the Old Believer churches.</p>	<p>But in order not to forbid to join to the church to those who ask and to other unregistered, but from long ago divided from the community of the Church, this can only be allowed on investigation from the bishop that he never went before into the Orthodox Church and took its sacraments and that on finding such upon acceptance into the Church read over him the attached resolving prayer. But those who have been in our Orthodox Church before cannot be allowed to join [the Old Believer Church].</p>
<p>6) That Old Believer priests and those Old Believers accepting the priesthood in spiritual matters be under the court and full instruction of Your Grace and in matters belonging to the Old Believers, bless to administer hearings and judgement via Old Believer priests, except such persons who require legal investigation. But in this it behoves the priest to relate to the Holy Synod and Your Grace, then to have a special secretary with payment coming from the Old Believer community.</p>	<p>6) It is possible to accept the sixth article.</p>
<p>7) Old Believer priests will receive Holy Anointing Oil from Your Grace.</p>	<p>7) Agreed.</p>
<p>8) Old Believer priests are not compelled to confess to anyone other than Old Believer priests.</p>	<p>8) This is left to the conscience of each priest.</p>
<p>9) Your Grace allow to bless Old Believer priests and Old Believers to make the sign of the cross with two fingers by the custom formerly in Russia.</p>	<p>9) This is placed to the good reason and conscience of each bishop, although protecting others from temptation.</p>

10) Sacraments previously performed by Old Believer priests, such as baptism, marriage, prayers, monastic vows (if there is no obstacle to this from the secular government) and other Christian requirements are to remain in their existing force and not repeated, even if some of the Old Believer priests were fugitives, self-appointed or correctly refused the right to officiate. Such Old Believer priests, placed now in Old Believer churches, will not be forced to perform the holy sacraments of the Greek Church (like burial, baptism, anointing, marriage and so on) over former Old Believers: these will remain in their existing force.	10) Agreed.
11) If any son of the Greco-Russian Church desires to be administered the Holy Sacraments from an Old Believer priest, such is not forbidden. Equally, if an Old Believer desires to be administered the Holy Sacrament in the Greek Church, this is not forbidden.	11) To this article, a son of the Orthodox Greek Church can only have permission when in extreme need and in fatal cases, where it is not possible to find an Orthodox priest and church, but Old Believers are allowed to without any difficulty.
12) If an Old Believer priest commits a crime deserving expulsion, such is presented to the court of Your Grace. If the guilt is of such a degree which only requires temporary punishment, then he should take penance in Old Believer churches, by the judgement of Your Grace.	12) Agreed.
13) Old Believer churches are to have three part books [i.e. metrical books] but, if any from the Old Believers at the time	13) Although it is possible to agree to this article, such fines contribute to the treasury, on which the well being of the Holy Synod

<p>of the holy fasts does not go to confession and have the Holy Sacraments administered, then they shall not have a fine placed upon them and will not be sent anywhere. Rather, their spiritual fathers should judge them by the holy rules. If from sloth, negligence or another illegal reason they deviated from the holies, then they should be noted in special books and punished by penances and other spiritual corrections.</p>	<p>depends. If all the Orthodox were liberated from fines and were punished for spiritual crimes with penances, then this would be the same as spiritual sin.</p>
<p>14) If there should be a marriage consisting of one half Greco-Russian Church and the other Old Believer, then such is married by common agreement either in the Greco-Russian Church or in the Old Believer Church.</p>	<p>14) It is possible to accept this article.</p>
<p>15) Old Believer priests in all cases have to make prayers about the health and good days of His Imperial Majesty, that of His Spouse Her Imperial Majesty, His Heir, all the rest of the Imperial Family according to the Synodal form.</p>	<p>15) This is necessarily required.</p>
<p>16) Insults, strife and disparagements of one side are not to be heard for the contents of different rituals of different books used in the liturgy because such differences do not belong to the essence of faith and Old Believers and the sons of the Greco-Russian Church will abide in peace, love and unity as a flock of the single holy ecumenical and apostolic Church.</p>	<p>16) A good and worthy request that will be kept in precision by all.</p>

With the above is included the opinions, 1) that upon the mutual acceptance and agreement of the above points, those being received on the aforementioned basis, the Church no longer calls schismatics or Old Believers (because in the Church there is nothing new and no new believers) and so calls them *soedinentsy* or *edinovertsy*. They, at my proposal, said that they agree to be such and therefore their church is to be called *Edinoverie*. However, those dwelling in obstinacy and in division from the Church are to remain under their former name, schismatics. 2) Upon granting permission to the petitions, the declamation of the following is required: ‘The Church exerted all diligence and zeal to bring those divided from it to the true path from the unhappy schism from whence they came, as is well known from many books published about the matter. For this purpose, it published many books, in which the errors of those who divided from it are clearly and conclusively shown as well as the sinfulness from sloth and ignorance that germinated in the old books: through comparisons with Greek and Old Church Slavonic books, such sinfulness was corrected and so the corrected books in our Orthodox Church are used. Although now there cannot be any other thought about all of this (that hitherto the Church recognised and recognises it as the truth), it, as a mother ill in heart, has not seen any great success in the conversion of those divided from the it (although some enlightened by God have completely joined to it) and so has judged it good to make some indulgences to those sinning in ignorance, although without temptation for those who think correctly. This will be done especially judging on their petitions, which by their good will reconcile them to the Church or otherwise join it. The Church thereby follows the example of the Apostles: ‘To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak [1 Corinthians, 9:22].’ This is conceived in the good hope that with time God will enlighten those who join and that they will come to agree that in nothing will they be different from the Church. This it considers necessary so that it is known to all that the Church now gives them indulgence for any fault and that the lecherous do not interpret that the Church itself sins and recognises their truth, as some dare to think and say.’

Appendix (b): Replacements for the rules of Platon, 1917-1918

Rules confirmed by the second National <i>Edinoverie</i> Congress, 23 rd -28 th July 1917. ²	Establishment of the Local Council of the Russian Orthodox Church, 22 nd February 1918. ³
1) <i>Edinoverie</i> society is the totality of Orthodox Old Believer parishes, located in the bosom of the Orthodox Russian Church and living by their special church customs and morals.	1) The <i>edinovertsy</i> are a flock of the United Holy Ecumenical and Apostolic Church whom, with the blessing of the Local Church, under unity of faith and administration, perform the church rites according to the liturgical books published under the first five Russian Patriarchs with the strict keeping of the old Russian customs and manners.
2) As they are distinguished by special religious church customs and morals, <i>Edinoverie</i> parishes are divided into different dioceses, headed by their <i>Edinoverie</i> bishops: on the first occasion, [they are created] by the order of the All Russian Local Council and, on following occasions, by the order of the same Council according to the presentations of regional councils, with the obligatory participation in the latter, personally or through representatives, of those bishops of those diocese from which <i>Edinoverie</i> parishes are divided into new <i>Edinoverie</i> dioceses.	2) <i>Edinoverie</i> parishes enter into the composition of Orthodox dioceses and are managed either according to the definition of the Council or, on the instruction of the diocesan bishop, by special <i>Edinoverie</i> bishops who are dependent on the diocesan prelate.
3) <i>Edinoverie</i> bishops receive the name of their cathedra from this or that town or populated place where there are <i>edinovertsy</i> .	3) The diocesan bishops have the same episcopal care for the religious life of <i>Edinoverie</i> parishes as for Orthodox parishes: upon review of the diocese, they can visit <i>Edinoverie</i> parishes and

² *Vtoroi Vserossiiskii s'ezd pravoslavnykh staroobriadtssev (edinovertsev) v N. Novgorode 23-28 iulia 1917 goda.* (Petrograd, 1917), 79–80.

³ *Sobranie opredelenii i postanovlenii sviashchennogo sobora pravoslavnoi Rossiiskoi tserkvi 1917-1918 gg.* (Moscow, 1918), 3–5.

	<p>serve in them by the regulations accepted in <i>Edinoverie</i> churches. Also, <i>Edinoverie</i> bishops who command <i>Edinoverie</i> parishes can, according to the instruction of the diocesan bishop and with his blessing, visit <i>Edinoverie</i> and Orthodox parishes and serve in the latter by the order accepted in the Orthodox Church, giving the diocesan bishop an account of all his journeys.</p>
<p>4) <i>Edinoverie</i> diocesan bishops, together with Orthodox diocesan bishops, are canonically united in regional and all Russian local councils of the Russian Orthodox Church and are subordinated to the higher church management, which will be established in the upcoming Local All Russian Council of the Russian Orthodox Church.</p>	<p>4) <i>Edinoverie</i> bishops receive their name from the town or other populated place with <i>Edinoverie</i> parishes but from that which is included in the title of the diocesan bishop.</p>
<p>5) <i>Edinoverie</i> and Orthodox diocesan bishops, composing the high hierarchy of the united Russian Orthodox Church, are engaged in continual canonical communion, in consequence of which the Orthodox bishops have diocesan care for the religious lives of <i>Edinoverie</i> parishes in the borders of their parishes, can visit <i>Edinoverie</i> parishes on review of their diocese, serve in <i>Edinoverie</i> churches by the <i>Edinoverie</i> ritual and in affairs of <i>Edinoverie</i> parishes communicate with the appropriate <i>Edinoverie</i> bishops so as to create the opportunity for full church unity between the <i>edinovertsy</i> and the Orthodox.</p>	<p>5) <i>Edinoverie</i> bishops participate in Local Councils of the Russian Orthodox Church in a number defined by the regulations of the Council.</p>
<p>6) <i>Edinoverie</i> bishops are elected in congresses of <i>Edinoverie</i> bishops. Orthodox bishops and representatives of the clergy and</p>	<p>6) Candidates for the position of <i>Edinoverie</i> bishops are elected by a gathering of <i>Edinoverie</i> clergy and</p>

laymen of that diocese which the elected bishop will manage can participate on appointment from the high ecclesiastical administration of the Russian Orthodox Church. Those selected to the episcopate are confirmed in this rank by the church administration of the Russian Orthodox Church and consecrated by <i>Edinoverie</i> bishops and by Orthodox bishops appointed by the same higher church administration.	laymen under the chairmanship of the local diocesan bishop, who will present the election with his review to the confirmation of the higher church authorities. The elected <i>Edinoverie</i> bishops are consecrated by Orthodox and <i>Edinoverie</i> bishops.
7) <i>Edinoverie</i> bishops in the aim of better managing the activities of the diocese have, as assistants, diocesan <i>Edinoverie</i> councils and their commissions, composed from the clergy and laymen. Under this, the latter enter in double quantity.	7) Under <i>Edinoverie</i> bishops exist superintendents with district councils under them on the normal basis.
8) A general congress of the clergy and the laity of those parishes that make up the <i>Edinoverie</i> diocese elect the diocesan councils and their commissions every three years.	8) In parishes, the parish assemblies and councils exist on the normal bases.
9) Moreover, diocesan congresses command the business of the funding of <i>Edinoverie</i> parishes to the advantage of church establishments of <i>Edinoverie</i> dioceses.	9) All clerical positions in <i>Edinoverie</i> parishes are occupied by the generally established church order: by the selection of parish communities with the confirmation of the <i>Edinoverie</i> bishop.
10) Making contributions to their diocesan needs, <i>Edinoverie</i> are not liberated from payments to the general needs of all the Russian Orthodox Church.	10) In the aims of the good order and strengthening of <i>Edinoverie</i> , the right is presented to <i>edinovertsy</i> to gather in diocesan, regional and All-Russian congresses in order to discuss questions about the needs of <i>Edinoverie</i> . In regional and All-Russian congresses, the bishop who chairs is appointed by the Patriarch and the Holy Synod and in

	diocesan <i>Edinoverie</i> congresses, either the <i>Edinoverie</i> bishop, on the instruction of the diocesan bishop, or the diocesan bishop himself chairs.
11) Elected district priests are the local organs of church authority in <i>Edinoverie</i> dioceses.	11) All communications with the higher church authorities on the business of the <i>edinovertsy</i> of the diocese are managed through the diocesan bishop. Petitions about the establishment in this or another diocese of a <i>Edinoverie</i> bishopric, with the statement of means for its support, are also initiated via the local diocesan bishop.
12) At the head of the parishes stand the parish councils, where representatives from the clergy and laymen enter under electoral representation.	12) In <i>Edinoverie</i> churches and monasteries, the old singing and old form of service must be strictly kept: the head of the monasteries and the clergy of the churches must not allow changes to the old order.
13) All clerical places in <i>Edinoverie</i> parishes are occupied according to the election of the parish community, with confirmation of the <i>Edinoverie</i> bishop.	13) In common celebratory services, held with by the mutual agreement of Orthodox and <i>Edinoverie</i> parishes, the singing is performed by the order of each parish alternately.
14) Since the books and rituals used by the <i>Edinoverie</i> in the liturgy are Orthodox, transfer of the Orthodox to <i>Edinoverie</i> churches and conversely the <i>Edinoverie</i> to Orthodox churches can be performed without obstacle. Note: <i>Edinoverie</i> parishes with churches can be transferred to the command of the Orthodox bishop and perform the liturgy by the order blessed by the Council of 1667 and, conversely, Orthodox churches and parishes	14) The re-assignment of <i>edinovertsy</i> to Orthodox parishes and equally of Orthodox to <i>Edinoverie</i> parishes can be performed without obstacle since the books and rituals used by the <i>edinovertsy</i> in the liturgy are also Orthodox. A person converting from <i>Edinoverie</i> parishes to Orthodox ones and from Orthodox to <i>Edinoverie</i> one must not be subjected to constraints. Note: In cases of requests of no less than

can be transferred to the command of <i>Edinoverie</i> bishops and perform the service by the old books when 4/5 of all the parishioners with full voting rights request this this.	four fifths of parishioners, <i>Edinoverie</i> parishes with churches can be re-assigned to Orthodoxy and have the liturgy by the order blessed by the Council of 1667 established in them. Conversely, Orthodox churches and parishes can be reassigned to the command of the <i>Edinoverie</i> bishop and the service can be performed by the old books in them.
15) In common divine services, arranged by mutual agreement, the singing is performed according to the rite of this or the other parish alternately.	15) Upon marriage, when one of the betrothed is a <i>edinovertsy</i> and the other Orthodox, marriage is performed in either the <i>Edinoverie</i> or Orthodox church by mutual agreement.
16) Upon marriages in those cases where one of the betrothed is a <i>edinovertsy</i> and the other Orthodox, the marriage is performed by mutual agreement in either the <i>Edinoverie</i> or Orthodox church.	16) Children of the <i>edinovertsy</i> , upon entering into Orthodox schools, and children of the Orthodoxy studying in <i>Edinoverie</i> schools, can without obstacle observe the regulations and customs of their parishes.
17) Children of the <i>edinovertsy</i> , upon entering into Orthodox schools and, conversely, the children of the Orthodox, studying in <i>Edinoverie</i> schools, may without obstacle observe the rituals and customs of their parishes.	17) Where it is found to be possible, open special basic and high classes and also pastoral schools for the education of students in love and adherence to the old way of life, (without insult to the general church ritual) in <i>Edinoverie</i> churches and communities for the preparation of pupils and candidates to the ranks of clergy and to acquaint them with that which is necessary to carry the struggle to the schism.

<p>18) The <i>edinovertsy</i> and the Orthodox should not cause factions or strife for the contents of different rituals and different books because such differences do not relate to the essence of faith. Let both dwell in peace, love and unity as a flock of the united Holy Ecumenical Apostolic Church of Christ.</p>	<p>18) <i>Edinovertsy</i> are not liberated from payments to the common needs of all the Russian Orthodox Church, <i>Edinoverie</i> clergy in local educational establishments and diocesan charitable institutions.</p>
	<p>19) For <i>Edinoverie</i> parishes that announce the desire to have <i>Edinoverie</i> bishops and demonstrate sufficient means for the support of them and their chancelleries, with the agreement of the diocesan bishops, cathedras of <i>Edinoverie</i> bishops are established in the dioceses of Petrograd (Okhtensk with residence of the bishop in the city of Petrograd), in the Nizhnii Novgorod diocese (Pavlovsk with residence of the bishop in the town of Pavlov), in Ufa diocese (Satkinsk with residence for the bishop in the Zlatoustovskii Voskresenskii <i>Edinoverie</i> monastery) and in Tolbol'sk diocese (Tiumen with residence for the bishop in the town of Tiumen').</p>

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Nizhnii Novgorod

Tsentral'nyi Arkhiv Nizhegorodskoi Oblatsi (TsANO)

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